

S 1694

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Water Resources Development

Introduced: Jun 25, 2015

Current Status: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 332.

Latest Action: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 332. (Dec 16, 2015)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1694>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Cantwell, Maria [D-WA]

Party: Democratic • **State:** WA • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Murray, Patty [D-WA]	D · WA		Jun 25, 2015

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Energy and Natural Resources Committee	Senate	Reported By	Dec 16, 2015

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Water Resources Development

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 S 2012	Related bill	Sep 8, 2016: Conference held.
114 HR 4686	Related bill	Mar 8, 2016: Referred to the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans.

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015

(Sec. 2) This bill expands the purposes of the Yakima River Basin Water Conservation Program to include:

- protection, mitigation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife and the recovery and maintenance of self-sustaining harvestable populations of fish and other aquatic life, both anadromous and resident species, throughout their historic distribution range in the Yakima River Basin;
- improving the reliability of municipal, industrial, and domestic water supply and use purposes, especially during drought years;
- implementation of the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan to realize water savings of not less than 85,000 acre feet;
- encouraging an increase in the use of water transfers, leasing, markets, and other voluntary transactions among public and private entities to enhance water management in the Yakima River Basin;
- improving the resilience of the ecosystems, economies, and communities in the Basin as they face drought and other changes; and
- authorizing and implementing the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan as Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project.

The bill defines "Integrated Plan" and "Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Plan" as the plan and activities authorized by the Yakima River Basin Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015 to be carried out in cooperation with, and in addition to, activities of the state of Washington and the Yakama Nation.

(Sec. 3) The bill directs the Conservation Advisory Group to provide recommendations to advance the purposes and programs of the Yakima River Basin Enhancement Project. Federal and state governments may fund up to the 17.5% of the local cost share of the Basin Conservation Program in exchange for the long-term use of the conserved water. The bill also allows water acquisition efforts to continue as needed to provide water to be used by the Yakima Project Manager for instream flow purposes and to allow voluntary water acquisitions to provide improved instream flows for anadromous and resident fish and other aquatic life.

(Sec. 4) The bill increases funding for: (1) the Wapato Irrigation Project, (2) development of additional storage capacity at Lake Cle Elum, (3) the Interim Comprehensive Basin Operating Plan, and (4) environmental compliance activities in the Yakima River.

The Yakima Indian Nation is redesignated as the Yakama Nation.

The Department of the Interior may conduct studies to evaluate measures to further Yakima Project purposes on tributaries to the Yakima River.

(Sec. 5) The bill directs Interior to:

- implement the Integrated Plan as Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project, subject to feasibility studies, environmental reviews, cost-benefit analyses, and available appropriations;
- implement an initial development phase of the Integrated Plan and develop plans for the intermediate and final development phases of the Integrated Plan;
- complete upstream and downstream fish passage facilities at Cle Elum Reservoir and another Yakima Project

reservoir;

- negotiate long-term agreements for a pump plan and associated facilities to access and deliver inactive storage at Kachess Reservoir and a conveyance system to allow water transfers from Keechelus Reservoir to Kachess Reservoir ("K to K Pipeline");
- participate in, provide funding for, and accept non-federal financing for water conservation projects intended to conserve 85,000 acre feet of water and for aquifer storage and recovery projects;
- conduct studies, feasibility analyses and environmental reviews of fish passage, water supply, conservation, habitat restoration projects, and other alternatives for the initial and future phases of the Integrated Plan;
- coordinate with and assist the state of Washington in implementing a robust water market to enhance water management in the Yakima River Basin;
- enter into cooperative agreements with, or make grants to, the Yakama Nation, the state of Washington, or other entities subject to a 50% non-federal cost-sharing requirement; and
- retain authority and discretion over the management of project supplies to optimize operational use and flexibility to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and treaty rights of the Yakama Nation.

Interior, in conjunction with the state of Washington and in consultation with the Yakama Nation, must submit to specified congressional committees, not later than five years after the enactment of this Act, a progress report on the development and implementation of the Integrated Plan.

Actions Timeline

- **Dec 16, 2015:** Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Reported by Senator Murkowski with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. With written report No. 114-187.
- **Dec 16, 2015:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 332.
- **Nov 19, 2015:** Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Jul 7, 2015:** Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-142.
- **Jun 25, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 25, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.