

Yakima River Basin Water

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3 **WHEREAS** agriculture provides the economic and cultural foundation for the Columbia
4 Basin's rural populations and contributes substantially to the overall economy of Eastern
5 Washington;

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7 **WHEREAS** agriculture's sensitivity to climate change stems from its dependence on
8 irrigation water, as well as other factors involving temperature and precipitation;

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10 **WHEREAS** drought in Washington state and across the West caused billions of dollars of
11 losses in 2015, and is predicted to cost billions more in the coming years;

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13 **WHEREAS** continued warming will reduce snowpack and change the timing of stream
14 flows, causing the availability of irrigation water during peak growing periods to be
15 unreliable at best;

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17 **WHEREAS** Washington's water resources serve many competing demands in addition to
18 agriculture;

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20 **WHEREAS** the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (YBIP) is
21 designed to provide a balanced approach to long-term water supply and environmental
22 issues in the basin, more dependable water supplies to meet agricultural and municipal
23 needs, and will significantly restore the fisheries and ecosystems of the Yakima River and
24 its tributaries;

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26 **WHEREAS** Senate Bill S. 1694, the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase
27 III Act of 2015, authorizes federal involvement in projects that improve water security for
28 farmers through water conservation, water marketing, and more access to water stored in
29 an existing reservoir during drought years, and also authorizes projects to restore fish
30 passage at two federal reservoirs and to protect and restore habitat for salmon, steelhead
31 and bull trout;

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33 **WHEREAS** the Bureau of Reclamation's statutory mandate to manage the basin's dams,
34 hydropower facilities and irrigation infrastructure, and legal requirements to manage
35 stream flows for tribal, fisheries and other needs requires that the federal government play
36 an active role in a solution to the water resources problem;

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38 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Benton County Democrats, call upon our
39 governmental leaders at the state and federal level to act now to approve S.1694 and to
40 fully support the YBIP in order to avoid future devastating economic and environmental
41 impacts in the region.

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43 *Submitted by Richard Badalamente to the Benton County Democratic Central Committee*
44 *3/1/2016.*