

Agenda Date: October 29, 2009
Item Number: C1

Docket: A-091590

Company Name: Utilities and Transportation - General

Staff: Rebecca Beaton, Infrastructure Manager
Robert Williamson, Senior Engineer

Recommendation

No action: Informational industry presentations.

Background

The Howard Hanson Dam is a federally owned and operated dam located in Southeast King County. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (Corp) is addressing the issues of structural integrity of the dam and potential for flooding. The levees along the Green River may not be capable of handling the volume of water that could be released as the result of a heavy winter storm.

Water release in the Howard Hanson Dam by the Corp could create flooding in the Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila areas of the Green River Valley. The Green River Valley is former farmland that now has an extensive network of warehouses, industrial plants, homes, and shopping centers. These communities have attendant utility infrastructure that could be adversely impacted in the event of a flood.

Historically the Green River Valley was fed by the White and Green Rivers. These rivers formed a confluence in Auburn that met the Black River near Tukwila. The combined rivers formed the Duwamish River which flowed into Elliott Bay. South of the White/Green river confluence was the Stuck River which flowed to Commencement Bay. The Stuck and the White rivers flowed so closely that the two rivers sometimes merged, causing floods north and south in the Green River Valley. The Howard Hanson Dam, built in 1962, alleviated annual flooding.

Discussion

Regulated companies with operations or facilities in the Green River Valley will make presentations to the Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission).

Presentations will include information on potential exposure to flooding, and preparations to mitigate the impact on services following a flood incident. Information on communication activity with the Emergency Management Division, county, and city emergency personnel will be included in the presentation.

The State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan states the commission is a support agency for information and coordination purposes. When an emergency occurs within the state, the commission provides informational assistance to regulated industries, other state agencies, the State Emergency Operations Center, and to the general public.

The commission maintains contact with regulated intrastate telecommunications, gas, and electric companies in the event of an emergency. The commission has statutory responsibility for service reliability, service quality, and consumer protection. The commission is further responsible for issuing permits granting authority to operate and has regulatory authority over services such as household goods, bus, and solid waste.

Conclusion

October 15, 2009, the commission heard presentations from the Emergency Management Division of the Military Department; Puget Sound Energy; and Olympic Pipeline on emergency mitigation planning.

October 29, 2009, the commission will hear presentations by Williams Pipeline; Qwest Communications; Comcast; AT&T; T-Mobile; Verizon Northwest; Allied Waste Services of Kent, Rabanco Companies & SeaTac Disposal and Kent-Meridian Disposal Company; and Waste Management of Washington.