

Seattle Chamber of Commerce
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Extending navigation on the Columbia River still won't pay off according to its present studies, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce Board of Trustees reiterated today.

"Despite recent declarations by proponents and our desire for vigorous development of state resources, the Chamber's Board of Directors found the plan to extend barge navigation to Rock Island Dam and to above Lewiston would cost more now than when first proposed in 1958," declared William Adams II, executive vice president.

Benefits fell short of costs in the year of 1958. The Chamber in 1959 opposed navigation extension by taxpayer subsidy of one mode of transportation at the expense of others without comensurate returns to the public.

It repeated its stand today. "Our state development division will keep close watch and report any new developments to the board," Adams said.

One Columbia Basin newspaper says navigation extension will cost about \$100 million, but the Chamber report on which the Board acted says the Corps of Engineers figures \$85 million. The estimated cost in 1958 was \$65 million.

Higher interest rates and construction costs will more than offset a plan to cut annual repayments by doubling the payoff time to 100 years, the Chamber report showed.

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A review of information now available shows less acreage planted to grain in the Columbia Basin than in 1958. Grain is the cargo most apt to be barged down the Columbia, a Chamber resolution said.

While extending navigation would bring certain benefits, it appears to be uneconomical and unwarranted to spend \$80 million in public money for channel construction and another approximately \$4 million a year in maintenance to subsidize barge lines so they may divert cargo which normally moves through Seattle, the Chamber report declared.

Bureau of Reclamation statistics show fewer acres were planted to wheat in the Columbia Basin in 1962 than in 1958.

Cutting annual costs by doubling the payoff period overlooks two important factors, the report added.

First, the Corps of Engineers says the project would cost \$80 million now instead of the \$65 million estimated in 1958.

And second, it is now necessary to pay about four percent interest instead of the two and a half percent used in figuring yearly payoffs in 1958.

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