Construction of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program's EL 22.1 Pipeline Project

An Environmental Justice Assessment (per RCW 70A.02.060)

By
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For the

Office of Columbia River
Washington State Department of Ecology
Union Gap, Washington

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[1] www.ecology.wa.gov/contact

Language Access

Under the state Environmental Justice law (RCW 70A.02), Ecology is required to conduct Environmental Justice Assessments during development of certain significant actions. This Assessment provides information about the potential impacts to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, and strategies to mitigate identified harms and fairly distribute known benefits. The Department of Ecology is committed to providing language services, including translation and interpretation, for people whose primary language is not English. To request these services, email EJ@ecy.wa.gov or call 360-480-6270.

Bajo la ley estatal de Justicia Medioambiental (RCW 70A.02), Ecología está obligada a realizar Evaluaciones de Justicia Medioambiental durante el desarrollo de ciertas medidas importantes. Esta evaluación proporciona información sobre los posibles impactos en las comunidades sobrecargadas y las poblaciones vulnerables, y las estrategias para mitigar los daños identificados y distribuir justamente los beneficios conocidos. El Departamento de Ecología está comprometido a ofrecer servicios de idioma, incluidos traducción e interpretación, para personas cuyo idioma principal no es el inglés. Para solicitar estos servicios, envíe un correo electrónico a EJ@ecy.wa.gov o llame al 360-480-6270.

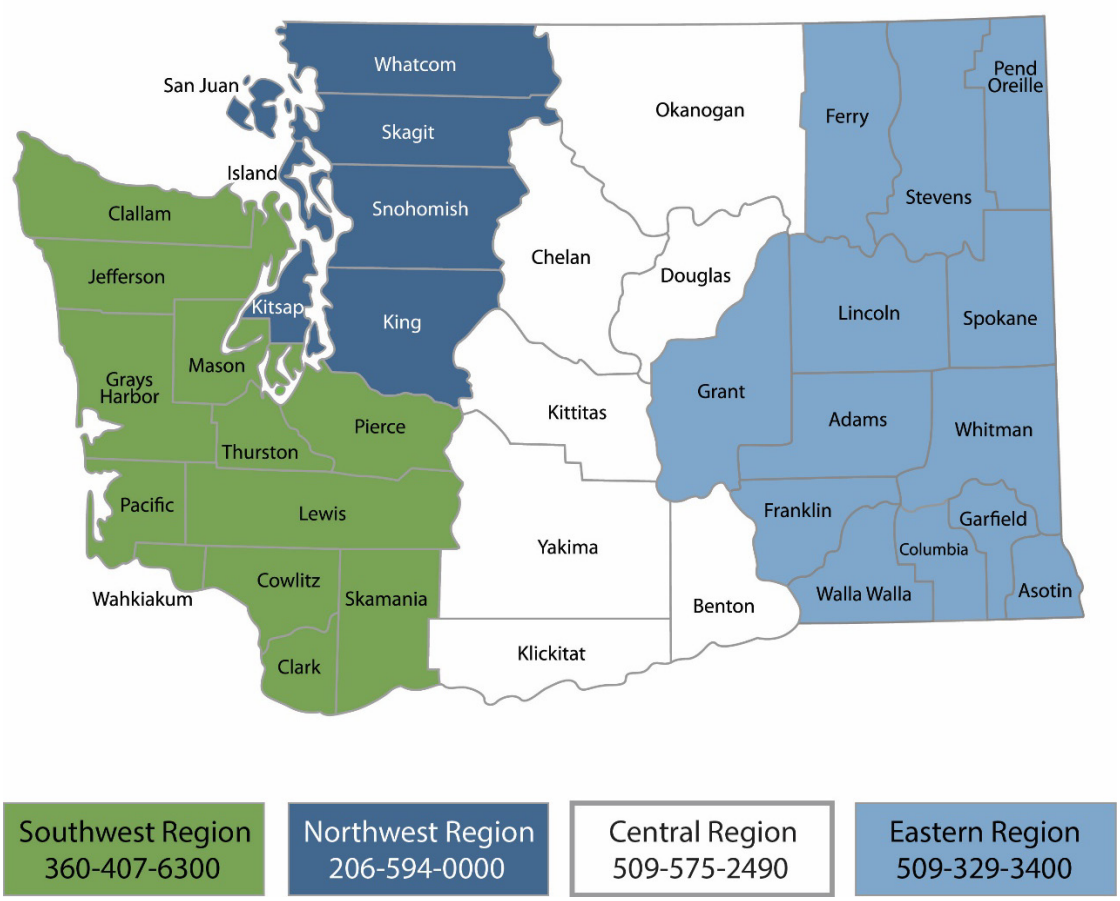
根据华盛顿州环境正义法(RCW 70A.02)，生态管理署在制定某些重大行动时必须进行环境正义评估。该评估需提供对负担过重社区和弱势群体潜在影响的信息，以及减轻已明确的危害和公平分配已知利益的策略。生态管理署致力于为母语非英语的人士提供语言服务，包括笔译和口译。如需求此类服务，请发送电子邮件至 EJ@ecy.wa.gov 或致电 360-480-6270。

Theo luật Công Bằng Môi Trường của tiểu bang (RCW 70A.02), Bộ Môi Sinh được yêu cầu tiến hành Đánh Giá Công Bằng Môi Trường trong quá trình triển khai một số hành động quan trọng. Đánh giá này cung cấp thông tin về các tác động tiềm ẩn đối với các cộng đồng đang chịu tổn hại và các nhóm dân cư dễ bị tổn hại cũng như các chiến lược nhằm giảm thiểu tác hại đã xác định và phân chia công bằng các lợi ích đã biết. Bộ Môi Sinh cam kết cung cấp các dịch vụ ngôn ngữ, bao gồm dịch thuật và thông dịch, cho những người có ngôn ngữ chính không phải là tiếng Anh. Để yêu cầu các dịch vụ này, quý vị vui lòng gửi email đến EJ@ecy.wa.gov hoặc gọi 360-480-6270. Nếu gọi điện, quý vị hãy yêu cầu kết nối với một thông dịch viên.

주 환경부는 중요한 조치를 계획할 때 환경 정의 평가를 수행해야 합니다. 이 평가는 취약계층 지역사회와 취약인구에 대한 잠재적 영향 관련 정보와, 확인된 피해를 완화하고 알려진 혜택을 공정하게 분배하기 위한 전략을 제공합니다. 워싱턴주 환경부는 모국어가 영어가 아닌 분들을 위해 번역 및 통역을 포함한 언어 서비스를 제공하기 위해 최선을 다하고 있습니다. 이 서비스를 요청하려면, EJ@ecy.wa.gov로 이메일을 보내시거나 360-480-6270 번으로 전화해 주세요.

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	P.O. Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	P.O. Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 West Alder Street Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 North Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Statewide	P.O. Box 46700 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

Construction of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program's EL 22.1 Pipeline Project

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Office of Columbia River
Washington State Department of Ecology
Union Gap, WA

June 2026 | Publication 26-12-012

DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

[2] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02&full=true#70A.02.010

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Executive Summary

The Washington Legislature has awarded $38.5 million for the construction of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program's EL 22.1 delivery system to further advance the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program. Groundwater supplies have been declining in the Odessa Subarea for many years, putting the region at risk of losing this vitally important resource. Groundwater pumping due to agriculture has largely caused the decline. These declines have forced landowners to deepen or abandon wells, with some wells being drilled deeper than 2,400 feet. Additionally, the water from these deep wells is hot and high in minerals that are detrimental to soil health. The Odessa Groundwater Replacement project works toward protecting the workers, farmers, and communities who depend on Central Washington's robust agricultural sector by providing surface water from the Federal Columbia Basin Project (CBP) to replace groundwater. Stabilizing this declining aquifer helps meet our goal of securing clean, available water for the present and future, especially as water supplies throughout the state face pressure from climate change.

Environmental Justice Assessment

Purpose of the Environmental Justice Assessment

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Assessment process helps assess the environmental justice impacts of Significant Agency Actions (SAAs). The assessment informs and supports consideration of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations when making decisions. This information assists with the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, the reduction of environmental harms, and the identification and reduction of health disparities.

The EJ assessment process aligns with Washington's Environmental Justice law called the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act (RCW 70A.02[3]), as well as federal commitments in the Performance Partnership Agreement[4] with the EPA. The assessment process draws on best practices established in Technical Guidance for Assessing Environmental Justice in Regulatory Analysis[5] and Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews[6].

Environmental justice assessments are to be completed for the following actions:

- The development and adoption of significant legislative rules as defined in RCW.05.328[7]
- The development and adoption of any new grant or loan program that a covered agency is explicitly authorized or required by statute to carry out
- A capital project, grant, or loan award of at least $12,000,000 or a transportation project, grant, or loan of at least $15,000,000
- The submission of agency request legislation to the office of the governor or the office of financial management for approval
- (Covered actions are expected to expand in 2025)

This assessment is not required to be a comprehensive or an exhaustive examination of all potential impacts of a significant agency action and does not require novel quantitative or economic analysis of the proposed significant agency action.

The time and resource investment, and depth of assessment, will be influenced by the reasonable applicability of the questions to the agency action.

Ecology plans to update this document and incorporate what we learn through practice, community engagement, Tribal consultation, and any guidance we may receive from the Environmental Justice Council.

This Environmental Justice Assessment is adapted for publication and does not include internal agency process instructions.

[3] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02&full=true
[4] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Accountability-transparency/Government-coordination/Partnering-with-the-EPA
[5] https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/technical-guidance-assessing-environmental-justice-regulatory-analysis
[6] https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-08/documents/nepa_promising_practices_document_2016.pdf
[7] http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=34.05.328

Section 1: Background

Background Information

1. Descriptive title of project/action:
   Construction of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program's EL 22.1 Pipeline Project

2. Date EJ Assessment initiated:
   July 1, 2025

3. Ecology Program/Office:
   Office of Columbia River

4. Point of contact for EJ Assessment:
   McKenna Murray

5. Significant Agency Action type, select one or more:
   ☐ Rulemaking
   ☐ New grant or loan program
   ☒ New capital project, grant, or loan of $12 million or more
   ☐ Request legislation
   ☐ Other, explain:

6. Write a short summary of the action.
   The Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) works towards stabilizing a declining aquifer that is vital to Central Washington farmers, workers, and communities. Ecology has been working with project partners since the early 2000s to bring water to this community. This specific action will provide $38.5 million in construction capital to build water supply infrastructure for over 17,000 acres of farmland. This action is anticipated to shift 34 wells from the Odessa aquifer to surface water.

7. Identify the method(s) for the public to comment on this proposed action for this assessment.
   Community outreach with an invitation to provide public comments will be provided through various community events. We will share information and opportunities for public comment on our website - https://ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/river-basins-groundwater/columbia-river-basin-projects/odessa-groundwater-replacement and through email. This information will also be publicized through the OGWRP Newsletter and the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition meetings and local radio stations. We will also work with project partners to make sure that the message is reaching overburdened

communities or populations with vulnerabilities. This information will be available in both English and Spanish. OCR will also invite Tribal consultation.

8. Create/provide an Ecology webpage with information about this proposed action. Provide link here: https://ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/river-basins-groundwater/columbia-river-basin-projects/odessa-groundwater-replacement

Section 2: Notification that an Environmental Justice Assessment has been Initiated

Notification to OEEJ is required when initiating the Environmental Justice Assessment.

1. Notify OFM so the action can be added to the HEAL Interagency Work Group dashboard. See instructions on the Environmental Justice Assessment SharePoint page for more information.
2. Email your answers to "Section 1: Background" OEEJhelp@ecy.wa.gov

OEEJ will:

- Post information about the action on the agency's external dashboard of all ongoing and completed Environmental Justice Assessments
- Email a notification of Environmental Justice Assessment initiation through our Environmental Justice GovDelivery system

Section 3: Identify Affected Tribes

Preparing for Tribal Consultation

1. Is the proposed action likely to have any local or regional impacts to federally reserved Tribal rights and resources, including but not limited to, those protected by treaty, executive order, or federal law? Choose one of the following:
   ☒ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Unsure

2. List any federally recognized Tribes that are expected to be affected by the proposed action. If it is determined during consultation that Tribes do not wish to be included, then do not include them.

Spokane Tribe of Indians
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Nez Perce Tribe
Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indians
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

3. If it is determined at any other point in the process of the assessment that Tribes have self-identified as being potentially impacted by the action, then include them in the assessment and offer consultation.

4. Describe plans to offer consultation to identified Tribes.
   Sent a notification letter to the tribes inviting their comment on the Environmental Justice Assessment. Additionally, OCR will continue ongoing communication and mitigation with the tribes as outlined in the Odessa Subarea Special Study FEIS (2012) and the Lake Roosevelt Incremental Storage and Releases Program FEIS (2008) in addition to other environmental and cultural commitments made as part of implementation.

Section 4: Offer Consultation:

1. Offer consultation with identified Tribes.
2. Summarize consultation in the next section, "Section : Summary of Tribal Consultation & Engagement."

Section 5: Summary of Tribal Consultation & Engagement

Summary of Tribal Consultation

1. Describe potential impacts (including harms and benefits) to federally recognized Tribal rights and interests in their tribal lands.
   - Do not share sensitive data or location information attributable to individual sites.
   - Do not share any information that Tribes have requested that you not share.

   One tribe responded to our outreach as part of this Environmental Justice Assessment. The Spokane Tribe requested a government to government to discuss the project. Office of Columbia River Director Larry Mattson, Section Manager Melissa Downs, and staff member McKenna Murray met with members of the Spokane Tribal Council and Spokane Tribal Natural Resources Staff on February 23rd. OCR staff presented on the project and answered questions.

There are no additional impacts as part of the EL 22.1 Construction to tribal interests that are not already outlined in the 2012 Odessa Special Study EIS.

2. Describe potential impacts related to Tribal rights and interests that are not in Tribal lands?

   No additional impacts as part of the EL 22.1 Construction to tribal interests that are not already outlined in the 2012 Odessa Special Study EIS.

3. Summarize recommendations from Tribes to:
   a. Mitigate or eliminate potential harms from the action.
   Continuing outreach and existing agreements related to the overall Odessa Program

   b. Equitably distribute benefits from the action
   Not applicable

4. Describe how consultation, engagement, and analyses of impacts to Tribes has informed the development of the action. If it has not, explain why.

   One tribe responded to our outreach as part of this Environmental Justice Assessment. The Spokane Tribe requested a government to government to discuss the project. Office of Columbia River Director Larry Mattson, Section Manager Melissa Downs, and staff member McKenna Murray met with members of the Spokane Tribal Council and Spokane Tribal Natural Resources Staff on February 23rd. OCR staff presented on the project and answered questions. The Spokane Tribe did not have any specific feedback about this project from the government to government and have not raised any concerns about the project continuing. While there was no specific feedback about this action, OCR is committed to incorporating tribal feedback and applying it to future projects.

5. Describe any plans to continue consultation or engagement with Tribes related to this action.

   Ecology is working on a follow-up meeting with the Spokane Tribe and the US Bureau of Reclamation as part of a previous agreement related to power revenues and withdrawals from Lake Roosevelt. This preexisting agreement is related to the water supply for the EL 22.1 Pumping Plant and Delivery System.

Section 6: Identification of Overburdened Communities & Vulnerable Populations

Identify Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

1. Identify the geographic area(s) anticipated to be affected by the action.

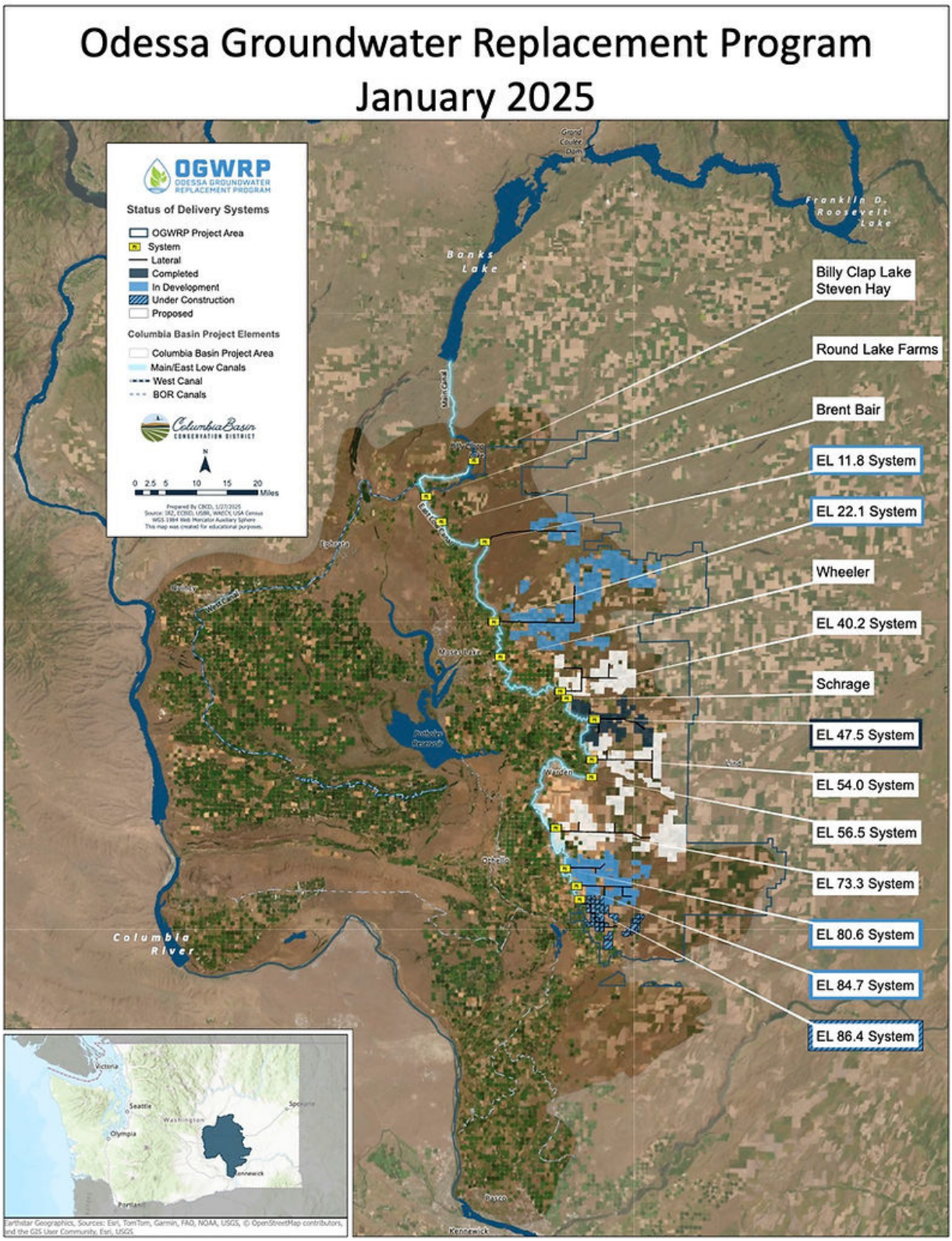

Figure 1: Map of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program Delivery Systems

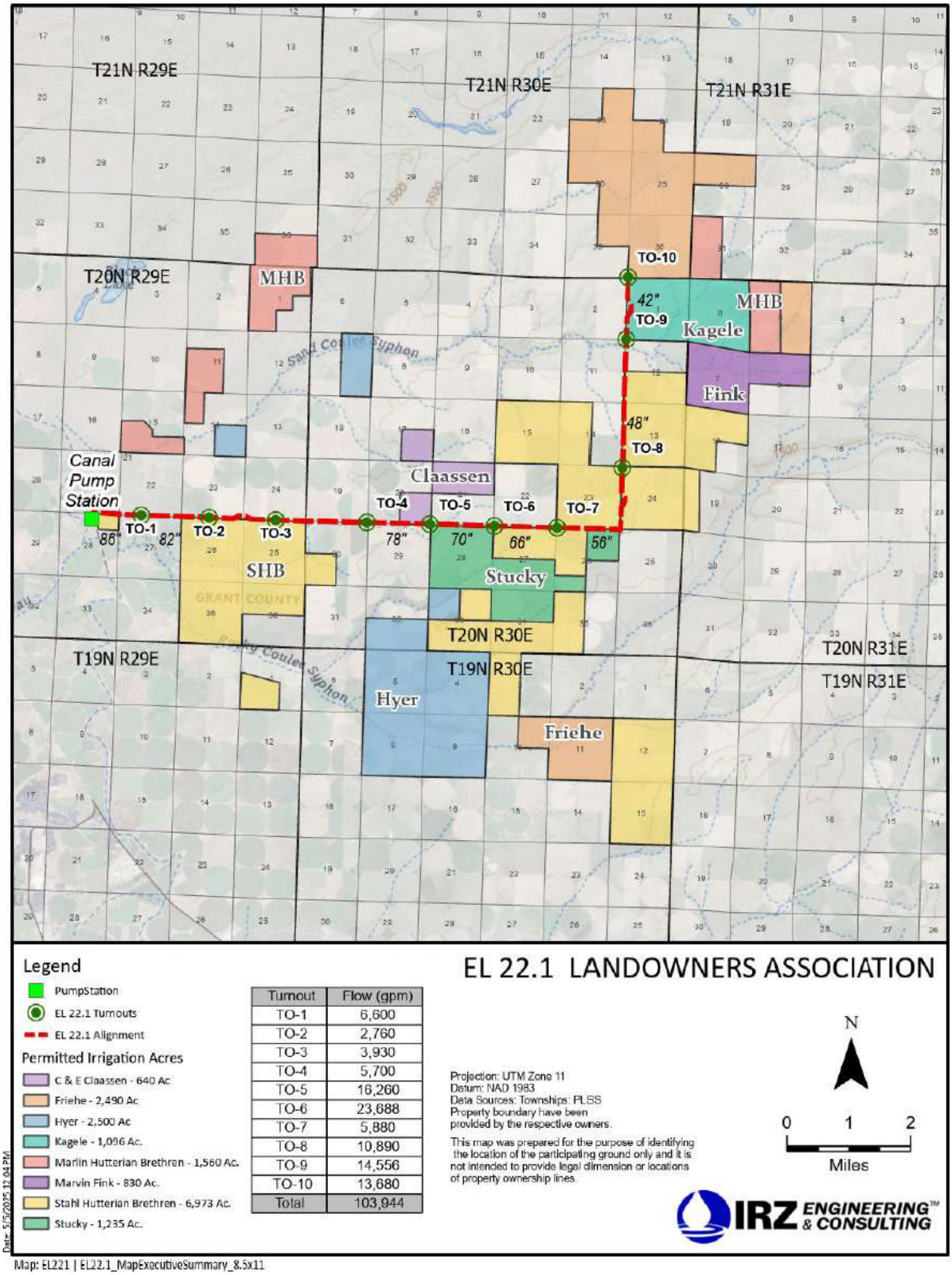

Figure 2: Map of the EL 22.1 Delivery System Delivery System and Pipeline and the acres that it serves.

2. When applicable, using the Washington State Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map (EHD Map), identify the EHD Map rankings for all census tracts likely to be impacted by the action.

3. From the rankings identified in question 2, are there any census tracts ranked 9 and 10?
   ☐ Yes
   ☒ No
   If yes, describe.

   Most of the land that will be directly impacted by construction is ranked 5.

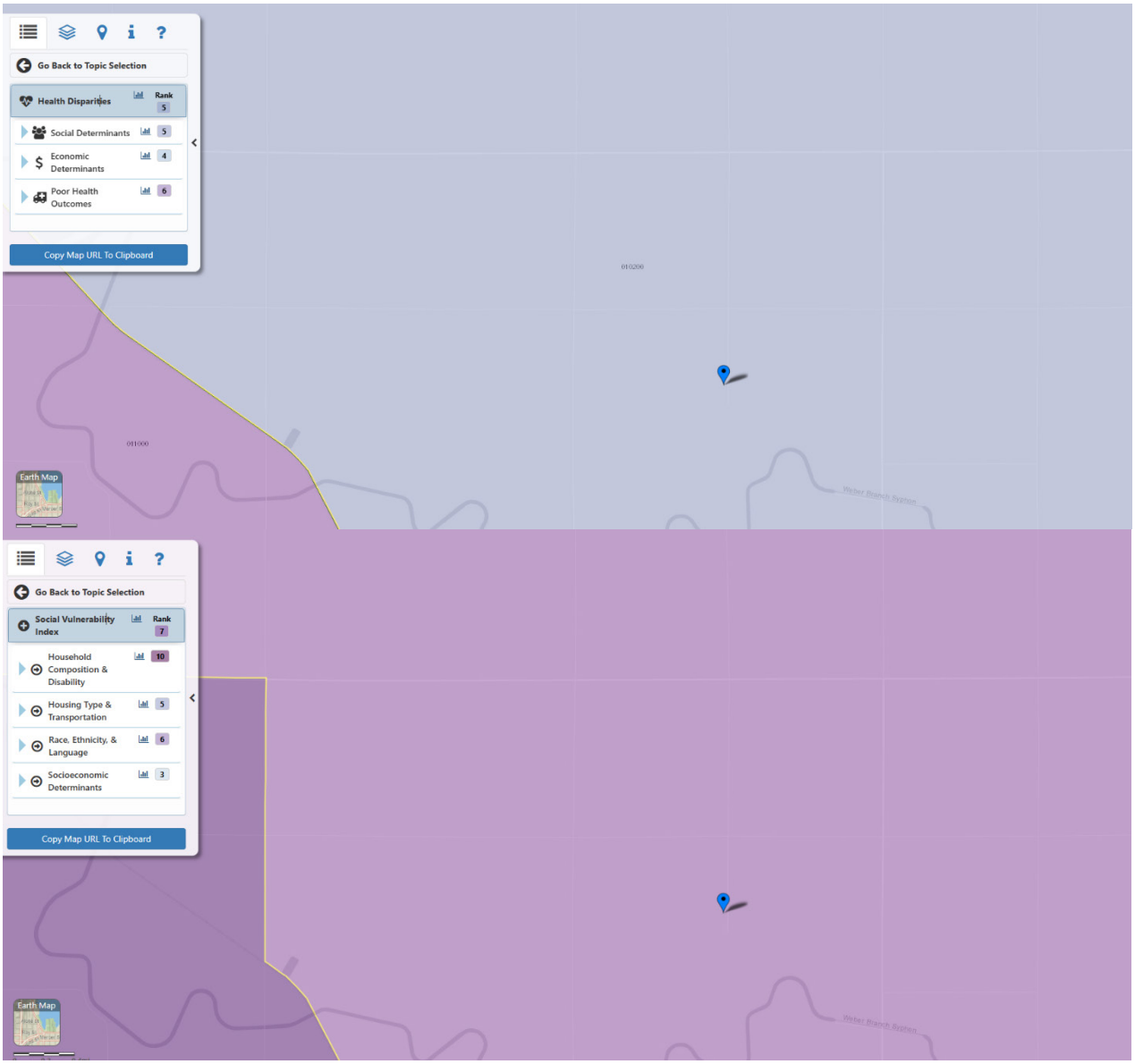

Figure 3: Map of EL 22.1 Delivery System area's health disparities from the Washington State Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map.

4. Please describe additional cumulative health considerations relevant to this action.

   The 2012 FEIS determined that there would be minimal impact to public health and no disproportionate impact to minority or low-Income populations. Additionally, these have been reevaluated as specific construction activities have taken place across the project area. The determination of minimal/no impacts have continued to be true through project implementation.

5. Identify areas likely to be impacted by the action that are at or above the 80th percentile (in state) for the "People of color" and "Low income" socioeconomic indicators. You can do this by looking at the EHD map rankings for these individual indicators (rank 9 or higher roughly approximates those census tracts at or above the 80th percentile), and/or by downloading the appropriate data on these indicators from the Washington Tracking Network or the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimates and running additional analysis to determine percentiles.

   From the 2012 FEIS, "The analysis area for environmental justice is primarily rural area and supports agricultural land uses, with few towns. Minority and low–income populations do reside within the environmental justice analysis area...However, no significant disproportionate impacts on these populations would occur with any of the Study alternatives."

6. Using the EHD map and/or data from Washington Tracking Network, identify any other indicators pertaining to socioeconomic characteristics, health disparities, and/or climate and environmental impacts at or above the 80th percentile (in state) that are relevant to this action.[8]

   Not applicable

7. Identify additional overburdened communities and vulnerable populations that are likely to be affected by the action.

   Farmworker communities

8. Through community engagement, were additional overburdened communities and vulnerable populations identified who are likely to be affected by the action? Describe additional communities or populations identified, and the reasons they would be considered overburdened and vulnerable.

[8] As appropriate for the action, you may also consult the Climate Vulnerability Index and/or the Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington interactive maps for supplementary data on climate impacts, beyond what is available via WTN.

No additional overburdened communities were identified.

9. Through Tribal Consultation, were additional overburdened communities and vulnerable populations identified who are likely to be affected by the action? Describe additional communities or populations identified, and the reasons they would be considered overburdened and vulnerable.

   No additional overburdened communities were identified.

Section 7: Summary of Community Engagement

Summarizing Community Engagement

1. Describe the engagement activities with identified overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

   Email blasts were sent out with project partners, posted on project partner websites, radio ads on a local Spanish radio station, and Ecology Staff presented at the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition Stakeholder meeting on January 15th, 2026.

2. What actions were taken to help address barriers to meaningful engagement?

   Materials were sent in both English and Spanish. Outreach to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations was done through a local Spanish radio station that project partners have successfully used in the past (including the Columbia Basin Conservation District, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Grant County and other Ecology Programs).

3. Identify overburdened communities or vulnerable populations potentially affected by the action who were not engaged and explain why not.

   Not applicable

4. Summarize recommendations from members of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to mitigate or eliminate potential harms from the action and/or equitably distribute benefits from the action.

   There were no responses from members of the community

5. Describe any plans for ongoing engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations related to this action.

Ecology will not be performing additional engagement, but project partners will continue outreach activities with local communities.

Section 8: Potential Environmental Benefits & Harms from Action

Identify Potential Environmental Benefits & Harms from Action

1. Describe the anticipated benefits (direct and/or indirect) from this action.

   This construction funding will provide water for 17,000 acres of farmland and take the demand off the aquifer from 34 wells.

2. Who will primarily benefit from this action?

   Odessa 22.1 landowners
   Municipalities and individuals relying on aquifer water supply

3. How is the action expected to benefit specifically overburdened communities or vulnerable populations? If there is no benefit, identify potential barriers to benefitting from the action.

   Not applicable

4. Describe anticipated harms (direct and/or indirect) from this action.

   Construction will create noise and vibrations, temporary air emissions, and increase truck traffic around the construction area.

5. Who will primarily experience the harms?

   The construction area does not have a significant residential presence as it is a rural agricultural area.

6. Describe how the action may harm overburdened communities or vulnerable populations? Be as specific as possible.

   Not applicable

7. Describe how the action would address environmental and health disparities.

This action is helping to relieve pressure on a declining aquifer that provides the sole source of drinking water for many surrounding communities in addition to irrigation and industrial for multiple large scale agricultural operations. This project has the potential to protect these rural communities' water supply.

Section 9: Options to Eliminate, Reduce or Mitigate Harms and Equitably Distribute Benefits

Identify Options to Eliminate, Reduce, or Mitigate Harms & Equitably Distribute Benefits

1. Describe options to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate the identified probable harms to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations; and options to equitably distribute the benefits.
   This construction funding was provisoed, so there are limitations about how the funding can be used. There are no probable harms to mitigate for.

2. Describe methods chosen for this action to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate the identified probable harms to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations; and methods chosen to equitably distribute the benefits. You must consider the following methods, but are not limited to them:
   - Eliminating the disparate impact of environmental harms on overburdened communities and vulnerable populations;
   - Reducing cumulative environmental health impacts on overburdened communities or vulnerable populations;
   - Preventing the action from adding to the cumulative environmental health impacts on overburdened communities or vulnerable populations;
   - Providing equitable participation and meaningful engagement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities in the development of the significant agency action;
   - Prioritizing equitable distribution of resources and benefits to overburdened communities;
   - Promoting positive workforce and job outcomes for overburdened communities;
   - Meeting community needs identified by the affected overburdened community;
   - Modifying substantive regulatory or policy requirements; and
   - Any other mitigation techniques, including those suggested by the council, the office of equity, or representatives of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

     No harms were identified, so no mitigation has been planned by Ecology. Any construction nuisances will be handled according to local laws and regulations.

3. If the agency determines it does not have the ability or authority to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate environmental harms caused by the action, or address the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, explain why that determination was made.

There were no harms identified, so there was no need to plan for mitigation. Any construction nuisances will be handled according to local laws and regulations, not by Ecology.

Section 10: Executive Summary

Provide a plain talked executive summary of the environmental justice assessment. Aim for the summary to be less than 1 page, and under 500 words.

Project Overview

The Washington Legislature has awarded $38.5 million for the construction of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program's EL 22.1 delivery system to further advance the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program. Groundwater supplies have been declining in the Odessa Subarea for many years, putting the region at risk of losing this vitally important resource. Groundwater pumping due to agriculture has largely caused the decline. These declines have forced landowners to deepen or abandon wells, with some wells being drilled deeper than 2,400 feet. Additionally, the water from these deep wells is hot and high in minerals that are detrimental to soil health. The Odessa Groundwater Replacement project works toward protecting the workers, farmers, and communities who depend on Central Washington's robust agricultural sector by providing surface water from the Federal Columbia Basin Project (CBP) to replace groundwater. Stabilizing this declining aquifer helps meet our goal of securing clean, available water for the present and future, especially as water supplies throughout the state face pressure from climate change.

22.1

The EL 22.1 system is north of I-90 & east of Moses Lake, WA and is designed to serve over 17,000 acres of irrigated lands replacement surface water. The proposed irrigation system would include a new canal turnout infrastructure, a large-scale canal pump station, and 12 miles of large diameter pipeline to provide Columbia Basin Project surface water to various properties. With funding from previous biennia and landowner funding commitments, the system is moving towards construction towards the end of the biennium.

Environmental Justice Assessment

As part of this proviso, the Department of Ecology completed an environmental justice assessment as part of Washington's environmental justice law, the Healthy Environment for All Act. Community engagement and tribal consultation began at the end of December 2025 and ran through March 2026. Ecology staff invited Tribal Consultation to all the Columbia River Tribes. Only the Spokane Tribe responded to our invitation to consult. Ecology staff met with the Spokane Tribal Government, provided an OGWRP Update, and answered questions. The Spokane Tribal Council did not express any concerns or provide any additional feedback. None of the other tribes responded to our invitation to consult.

Ecology provided community engagement through an informational flyer, radio ads, a presentation to a local community group, email blasts, and a public comment form via the Ecology website. No other feedback was received from the affected tribes or community members. We did not receive any comments from overburdened communities or vulnerable populations. Beyond not receiving feedback from these communities, there are no anticipated impacts to overburdened or vulnerable communities. This project will remove demand from a declining aquifer by taking 34 wells off the aquifer and provide water to 17,000 acres of farmland. The project may create some potential construction-related nuisances. Construction nuisances will be managed according to local laws and construction permit requirements, not by Ecology. Ecology supports continuing with the project to construct the EL 22.1 Pumping Plant and delivery system.

Section 11: Notification of Completed Assessment

1. Send the completed EJ assessment to OEEJHelp@ecy.wa.gov. See the OEEJ SharePoint for further instructions.

   OEEJ will:
   - Post the completed assessment on the on the agency's external dashboard of ongoing and completed Environmental Justice Assessments
   - Share the assessment over the Environmental Justice GovDelivery list

2. After receiving the weblink from OEEJ to the assessment, share the link with:

   ☐ Any affected Tribes (or share the assessment via the methods identified during consultation).
   ☐ People who provided contact information through community engagement