



PRESS RELEASE

8.31.2023

The City of Carnation adopted a State of Emergency Declaration last night on August 30, 2023. The Declaration was adopted unanimously by the Carnation City Council due to its concerns and doubts about the City of Seattle's ability to operate the Tolt Dam.

The City of Seattle owns and operates the Tolt Reservoir and Dams, located 16 miles upstream from the City of Carnation on the South Fork Tolt River. The reservoir stores 57,900 acre-ft of water to supply 30% of the drinking water for 1.5 million people in the metropolitan Seattle area.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulates the 200-foot high earth-filled dam, and conducts annual safety inspections each year in conjunction with SPU's own dam safety engineers. Every five years, an independent consultant firm also performs a comprehensive evaluation and inspection on the safety of the dam. These efforts ensure that the dam complies with federal dam safety regulations and engineering requirements to maintain safe operating conditions and engineering standards. The relicensing process for the Tolt Dam is underway and the City of Carnation is an active participant in this process.

On July 28, 2020, the Tolt Dam alarm system failed at 11:16 a.m. and sent the Carnation community into panic, chaos and residents started to evacuate the City. By 11:17 a.m. SPU had determined that the alarm was false, and that the integrity of the dam was intact. By 11:54 a.m. SPU turned off alarms. On August 22, 2023, the Tolt Dam alarm system failed again and residents of the eastern part of the town began evacuation protocols. Mayor Ribail indicated that "2,300 residents in Carnation live in constant fear due to the traumatic events in 2020. We have waited three years for reassurances that the Tolt Dam Alarm system is reliable and that Seattle is a responsible operator. We are done waiting."

The Carnation community is traumatized from these events. The civic leadership of the City has organized a community forum to outline desired changes to the City's relationship with the City of Seattle related to the Tolt Dam. The City of Seattle Mayor and City Council have been invited to attend this meeting. On August 31, 2023 Carnation staff visited Seattle City Hall to personally make appointments to deliver the forum's invite to the Seattle elected officials. Deputy Mayor Harris said "the city of Seattle has been able to externalize the costs of its utility services for

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decades. Whether we're talking about the loss of salmon habitat because of their dam on the Skagit, the billions of dollars of investment we're being asked to make to resolve their sewer overflows into Puget sound, or in this case, the recurring trauma being inflicted on the City of Carnation due to their Dam on the Tolt, it ends up being the REGION that bears the cost of Seattle's infrastructure. It's time for the Federal Government and the State to make sure that Seattle fixes these problems, and that communities like ours, who're constantly being asked to pay the price for Seattle's infrastructure, are made whole".

Tentatively this event has been scheduled for September 30, 2023 in Carnation. For more information: Ana Cortez, 425.419.3697.