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Mike Williams
Asset Systems Management (Devon)
Environment Agency
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Dear Mr Williams

I write on behalf of the South Hams Society to object to the Environment Agency's proposals to flood South Efford Marsh, Aveton Gifford, Devon in order to create a salt marsh habitat. Our Society has about 500 members who take a deep interest in the natural environment of the South Hams and proposals for its development.

The marsh at South Efford has been used for grazing for many years and is considered by local residents to be a valuable habitat for many species of plant, bird and animal life - a view which is supported by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. I understand that the Agency has conducted no survey of the site and therefore cannot be aware of the value of what it is proposing to destroy.

Further the effect of such a change on the sensitive environment of the River Avon is unknown. Neighbouring settlements, river navigation, local activities such as the oyster farm may all be effected in ways which have not been investigated and cannot with certainty be determined.

Even the creation of the salt marsh habitat desired must be in doubt - at the least it will be many years before its success can be judged. The addition of salt marsh resulting from this proposal to the national "assets" would be minute and anyway salt marsh already exists other places in the Avon Estuary

Finally at a time of economic stress the Agency must surely be able to identify projects where the funds might be better spent with greater chances of success and fewer possibilities of damaging other environments, habitats and activities.

I hope that the Agency will reconsider this proposal with its uncertain outcome.

Yours sincerely

John Chalmers