



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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March 11, 2011

The Honorable Dan Pike, Mayor
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: Lake Whatcom Watershed

Dear Mayor Pike:

As you know, in response to the city of Bellingham's (City) petition to close the Lake Whatcom Watershed to new groundwater withdrawals, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has three options. We can grant the petition, deny it with an explanation or deny it and provide an alternative means to address the concerns raised in the petition. I have decided to exercise the third option.

I assure you that I take the problems leading to the petition very seriously and that Ecology's primary goal is to protect the lake from further degradation. Since receiving the City's petition, we have been working with Whatcom County (County) to develop a strategy that will prevent additional loadings of phosphorus to the lake from new development and protect the City's water right.

The actions that the County has agreed to take are:

- 1) On an accelerated schedule, prepare amendments to the county code that will prevent new development from contributing additional phosphorus to the lake. The formal amendment process would begin in July 2011.
- 2) Track the number of incoming building permit applications in the watershed and report the activity to Ecology on at least a weekly basis.

Ecology believes that if such amendments are adopted and effectively implemented, the goals of the City's petition will be achieved. If the amendments are not adopted or are not properly implemented, additional regulatory actions may be taken by Ecology to assure that our water quality goals for the lake are aggressively pursued and achieved.



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I applaud your commitment to the health of Lake Whatcom, and appreciate how the City has followed through on that commitment through real, on-the-ground efforts. It is my hope that this cooperative effort with the County will achieve the result we all want, and the lake needs – clean water. If you have any further questions, please contact Richard Grout in our Bellingham Field Office at richard.grout@ecy.wa.gov / (360) 715-5203.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Sturdevant', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Ted Sturdevant
Director

cc: Richard Grout
Pete Kremen, Whatcom County Executive