

From: Susan Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 04, 2012 6:48 PM
To: Wessel, Ann (ECY)
Subject:

Dear Ms. Wessel,

The Department of Ecology (DOE) is proposing a number of significant limitations on water usage in our area.

I am concerned that these limitations will ultimately stifle development, decrease land values, adversely impact the business-generated and real estate-related tax bases, and, likely, result in lawsuits over what could be construed as a government “taking” of land. Lastly, and perhaps more important, they will deprive citizens of the right to use their land in keeping with traditions established over many years.

It would appear that, in essence, DOE’s scientists assert that there is a hydrological connectivity between aquifers and the waters flowing in streams and rivers and, furthermore, that an increase in the number of wells drawing from these aquifers will cause a corresponding decrease in the flow levels in the rivers. To remedy this perceived problem, DOE contends that it must implement and enforce a complex and expensive system of water banking and mitigation.

However, many other equally knowledgeable scientists contend that this supposed hydrological connectivity has not been proven and is merely a hypothesis. Moreover, if such a connectivity does exist, the effects of the wells on the flow levels is minimal and, therefore, the hardships inflicted on the general populace will far outweigh any potential benefits.

In fact, DOE’s own economist, Mr. Hoff, indicated that the probable costs of implementing the rule far out-weighed the potential benefits that would be achieved upon implementation. It should be noted that shortly after Mr. Hoff voiced his concerns, he was relieved of his duties and transferred elsewhere in the department.

The town meeting held on 6/28/12 reflected that the majority of the citizens that will be impacted by these limitations are emphatically against them. Many speakers at this meeting pointed out the legal flaws as well as the lack of logic and the punitive nature of the proposed rules. Similar commentary was presented at the Board of Commissioners meeting on 7/3/12.

Accordingly, I request that you delay the implementation of these rules until such time as you can convince the affected population – as well as our elected representatives – that these rules are logical, lawful, and beneficial by means of a thorough, independently performed economic study.

Thank you for your attention. Susan Smith

Susan Sparks Smith Silpada Independent Consultant

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