



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600 • Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

711 for Washington Relay Service • Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341

July 22, 2009

Dear Sir,

Thanks for the opportunity to set the record straight on Jeff Chew's July 15th article, *Kessler seeks answers from Ecology*. I attended this meeting, but the story doesn't accurately reflect the tone, purpose and outcomes of the discussion. Among other errors:

- The watershed planning unit was created by local government and tribes. While an Ecology grant funds the unit, Ecology has only one seat and one voice at the table. This group is responsible for long-range watershed planning based on the rule. But the group doesn't write the rule.
- As usual, this watershed meeting was led by a facilitator – not Ecology. Guest speakers were from the Puget Sound Partnership and Hood Canal Coordinating Council, unaffiliated with the proposed in-stream flow rule. The facilitator suggested directing rule questions to Ecology staff rather than the special guests.

We're nearing the finish line on a multi-year process to develop a best possible water management rule for the Quilcene-Snow watershed. Ecology appreciates those who have participated with questions, ideas, criticisms or support. Ecology's been responsive to what we've heard and created a draft rule that balances community interest with state law.

Water is a finite resource we all need. Effectively managing the groundwater supply and what's in our streams will help ensure it's there in the future.

Sincerely,

Phil Wiatrak,
Washington Department of Ecology
WRIA 17 Planning Unit member

