



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

15 W Yakima Ave, Ste 200 • Yakima, WA 98902-3452 • (509) 575-2490

August 12, 2010

Board of Kittitas County Commissioners
Honorable Paul Jewell, District #1, Vice-Chairman
Honorable Alan Crankovich, District #2
Honorable Mark McClain, District #3, Chairman
Kittitas County Courthouse
205 West 5th, Suite 108
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Dear Board of Kittitas County Commissioners:

Based on prior discussions between the County and Ecology regarding the need to timely obtain additional technical information about Upper Kittitas hydrogeology, we are writing this letter to confirm that Ecology is preparing to proceed on a formal Inter-Agency agreement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) for the Upper Kittitas County Hydrogeology study.

As you know, the scope of the study was developed by a mutually appointed advisory committee formed at the request of Ecology and Kittitas County in 2009. The hydrogeology study will follow the basic principles that the advisory committee recommended as follows:

Upper Kittitas County Ground Water Study – Ecology will initiate a ground water study focusing on that portion of Kittitas County that are the subject to rule (WAC 173-539A) and not addressed in detail by the USGS ground water study of the Yakima River Basin.

- a. The Upper Kittitas County ground water study will define the hydrogeology of the study area, provide information regarding ground water occurrence and availability, document the extent of ground water and surface water continuity in the study area, and determine the extent of potential impairment resulting from exempt well use.
- b. The Upper Kittitas County Advisory Committee developed a scope of work in February 2009. The Upper Kittitas County Advisory Committee will provide input to Ecology concerning the implementation of the study. Membership of the advisory committee was mutually agreed upon by Ecology and Kittitas County and represents a broad spectrum of the public.



We plan to complete our Inter-Agency agreement with the USGS by September 30, 2010. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments regarding this approach.

A purpose statement for an Inter-Agency Agreement with the USGS is provided as Attachment "A" for your consideration. We look forward to working with Kittitas County and the advisory committee to provide additional scientific analysis in coordination with the proposed rule (WAC 173-539A).

Domestic Water Reserve Program - Ecology is very interested in continuing to explore the Domestic Water Reserve Program concept and will be working with the executive committee of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup in exploring all water supply options, including the feasibility of creative fallow or dry-year lease option agreements with basin irrigators, as contemplated by Rep. Judy Warnick's budget proviso and expressly supported by Governor Gregoire.

Development of such a program will take considerably more time than the September 30, 2010 date identified in the budget proviso because of the complexity of the issue and the need for broader stakeholder participation. Therefore, because of the relatively short timeframe to encumber the study funds so as not to lose them we feel it is imperative that we move forward with the hydrogeologic study by September 30, 2010.

As may be necessary, Ecology would support a request to state legislators for additional funding to develop and establish such programs if feasible in the Yakima River Basin.

I appreciate the work and effort that the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners have invested in this important issue and would like to thank you again for your participation in this important scientific work to better inform water management decisions in the Yakima River Basin.

Sincerely,



G. Thomas Tebb, L.Hg. L.E.G.
Central Regional Director

GT:cmr (100802)

Attachment: Inter-Agency Agreement w/USGS – Objectives of Groundwater Study in Upper
Kittitas County

Attachment "A"

**Inter-Agency Agreement with USGS
Objectives of Groundwater Study
in
Upper Kittitas County**

Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is entering into this Inter-Agency Agreement with USGS for a ground water study of the western portion of Kittitas County, an area commonly referred to as the upper County.

The objectives of this ground water study are to: (1) define the hydrogeology of the study area, (2) provide information regarding ground water occurrence and availability, (3) document the extent of ground water and surface water continuity in the study area, and (4) determine the extent of potential impairment resulting from exempt well use.