

May 31, 2005

Mr. Dwight Opp
Stimson Lumber Company
P.O. Box 1499
Newport, WA 99156

Dear Mr. Opp:

Thank you for your public comment letter received on December 17, 2004, regarding Washington State's Water Quality Assessment for 2002/2004. The department received over 45 comment letters during this last review process and is appreciative of the time you took to review and comment on this assessment. We realize that there is an extensive amount of information in the Water Quality Assessment. The scrutiny given by you and other public reviewers has resulted in many changes and corrections that improved the accurateness of the final submittal to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Water Quality Assessment is being submitted to EPA as an "integrated report" to meet the Clean Water Act requirements of sections 305(b) and 303(d). EPA will only take approval action on Category 5 of the assessment, which represents the state's 303(d) list. The Water Quality Assessment can be viewed at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/303d/index.html>.

We appreciate your suggestions to work closely with the on-going collection efforts of county conservation districts as well as state efforts through the Department of Natural Resources. We will be starting the public process for the 2006 listing shortly after we submit the 2004 Assessment to EPA and look forward to working with you and many others who are interested in Washington's water quality efforts.

Thank you again for taking the time to provide comments to Ecology. If you have questions regarding the above responses, or would like further clarification, please feel free to call me at 360-407-6414.

Sincerely,



Susan Braley
Unit Supervisor
Watershed Management Section