

May 31, 2005

Ms. Pam Bissonnette
Director, Natural Resources & Parks
King County
King Street Center
201 S. Jackson St., Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

Dear Ms. Bissonnette:

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 asked staff from our Environmental Assessment Program (EAP), Marine Unit, to review your comments related to dissolved oxygen occurring naturally in the central basin of Puget Sound. You provided useful information suggesting that historically these stations have had low dissolved oxygen levels at times of the year it would be expected. This information, along with Ecology historical data, both concluded that these low dissolved oxygen levels are a naturally occurring condition. These listings have been moved to Category 1.

We also asked EAP staff who did the technical assessments of data to review your information regarding ammonia listings. The information you provided was correct, and we realized in looking back at our assessment that there was an error in our calculations. However, in reviewing the data records, there was additional data that was not a part of King County's assessment. Because of the complexities we are finding, we have decided to inactivate these

Ms. Pam Bissonnette

Page 2

May 31, 2005

ammonia records for the 2004 submittal to EPA. We will then work with King County staff to fully and accurately assess the ammonia data, and the results will then become part of the 2006 listing process. I talked with Jonathan Frodge from your department and he agreed with this approach.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Braley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Susan Braley

Unit Supervisor

Watershed Management Section