



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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June 20, 2008

Mr. Michael Gearheard, Director  
Office of Water  
U.S. EPA Region 10  
1200 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. Gearheard:

Washington's 2008 Water Quality Assessment packet is enclosed. It is being submitted to EPA as an "integrated report" to meet the Clean Water Act requirements of sections 305(b) and 303(d). This has been a significant undertaking and has taken much effort by our agency and all the stakeholders who have engaged in the process to prepare this list for submission to you. All the information we are submitting will be available on our website along with a responsiveness summary for the public comments received. An outline of this submittal is enclosed.

The 2008 Assessment database now contains over 26,000 water quality records with assessment results. Almost 15,000 of these records are brand new assessments, representing greater than 100 percent increase in the amount of assessed waters from the previous listing cycle. These assessments involved well over two million sample data values that were reviewed. This significant increase was possible because the agency's Environmental Information Management (EIM) database allowed for external submittals and bulk retrieval of data for the assessment. Of the 26,000 records assessed, the following are summaries of the category results:

- Category 1 - Attains water quality standards - 30%
- Category 2 - Waters of concern - 16%
- Category 3 - Insufficient information - 29%
- Category 4 - Has an approved cleanup plan - 11%
- Category 5 - The 303(d) List - 14%

We want to note that with the significant increase in data assessments, the ability for the public to review the assessment results becomes more challenging. To this end, we worked closely with our Information Technology and Geographic Information System (GIS) staff to improve the ability for the public to view and use the Water Quality Assessment results. One significant change that resulted from this effort is the ability to use the Simple Query Tool and Map Tool for both water column and contaminated sediments data. In the previous 2004 Assessment, sediments data was reported in a separate table and not viewable. We believe this new ability to



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view both water quality media will enhance the information available to the public on the status of waters in our state. Another significant improvement is the ability to query water quality information by the seven Puget Sound Action Areas. With the significant work and focus on improving water quality in Puget Sound, we felt this was an important addition to the assessment. Finally, the public can now also view assessment results by county.

Throughout this process, we have worked closely with your staff to make sure we have adequately responded to the questions and clarifications that EPA needs in order to approve the candidate 303(d) list. We especially want to express appreciation for the work that Donna Walsh has done to balance our assessment based on state policy with EPA requirements.

We look forward to your approval of this list. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like additional assistance orienting you and your staff to this large package of information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Susewind', written in a cursive style.

Kelly Susewind, P.E., P.G.

Interim Water Quality Program Manager

Enclosure

cc: David Croxton