

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

September 28, 2012

Dan Newhouse, Director
Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 42560
Olympia, WA 98504-2560

Mary Selecky, Secretary
Department of Health
P.O. Box 47890
Olympia, WA 98504-7890

Ted Sturdevant, Director
Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-47600

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 47721
Olympia, 98504-7721

Anthony Wright, Executive Director
Puget Sound Partnership
326 East D Street
Tacoma, WA 98421

Dear ~~Dan~~ Mary, Ted, Mark, and Anthony:

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We have made great progress in cleaning up and protecting our waters, but challenges clearly remain. I see too many shellfish beds closed due to bacterial contamination, unacceptable levels of nitrate contamination in key aquifers around the state, and polluted surface waters that threaten human and aquatic health.

Addressing this challenge is not something the state can or should do alone. This takes everybody working together: landowners, the agricultural sector, the environmental community, tribal governments and local, state and federal agencies. While we still have work to do in the Samish River basin, our collaborative effort in that basin has brought considerable progress. Because agriculture is only one of many sources of pollution, we must continue to bring everyone to the table in order to find solutions. I ask you to encourage and support collaborative processes as we step up to water quality challenges in other areas, such as in Whatcom County and the Yakima River valley.

Let me address up front the issues related to agriculture practices. Agriculture is central to Washington's economic success and cultural identity. Protecting Washingtonians' quality of life demands that we ensure clean water *and* a thriving agricultural sector. Too often, past practices have led to these values being mutually exclusive, and in many areas water quality has suffered due to inadequate agricultural practices. Accepting that one of these interests must suffer for the other to thrive is old thinking, and I reject it. Our challenge and responsibility is to lead the transition to a Washington that enjoys clean water all across the state as well as a robust agricultural way of life.

I know that you are all working hard to address this challenge, both in targeted areas of the state and statewide. You have launched several efforts to improve water quality over the past few years, and made progress on several fronts. However, there is clearly more work to do. The public needs



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3. By December 31, 2012, finalize the policy and budget recommendations from the Yakima Valley Ground Water Management Area program to address nitrate pollution in the valley ground waters from agricultural practices and other sources (WSDA, ECY, WSCC, DOH).
4. Develop clear guidance for, and implement, Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) programs in partnership with counties around Puget Sound. As part of the Washington Shellfish Initiative, clear guidance is needed by January 1, 2013 to expand this promising model, which has been shown to provide an effective, ongoing approach to finding and correcting sources of nonpoint pollution to Puget Sound. Your work on this guidance should be consistent with the work you complete in the Three Directors' Talks. (DOH, ECY)
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6. Work with each other, industry, other stakeholders, and legislators to develop legislation for the 2013 legislative session that addresses the gaps in the state's regulation of nutrient management to ensure the state has adequate statutory authority. Such legislation should ensure that all livestock waste is managed responsibly, that surface and ground water is protected, and that adequate monitoring is in place to ensure clean water. (WSDA, ECY, WSCC)

Though your agencies each have different statutory missions, those missions are aligned when it comes to improving our regulatory and voluntary approaches to protecting water quality while supporting a healthy agricultural sector. I look forward to your report on the above actions.

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