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December 16, 2010

Ms. Becca Conklin
Washington Department of Ecology
Water Quality Program
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
swqs@ecy.wa.gov

RE: The Surface Water Quality Standards Triennial Review Process

Dear Ms. Conklin:

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) wishes to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Triennial Review Process. As an operator under several types of NPDES permits, WSDOT is subject to compliance decisions based on the state's water quality standards and criteria. As such, we wish to draw your attention to the following areas our agency considers important as the Department of Ecology (Ecology) prioritizes issues that it will address during the Triennial Review.

1. Faced with a growing number of fecal coliform-triggered TMDL obligations emerging ion our NPDES municipal permit, WSDOT encourages Ecology to consider adopting more predictive pathogenic bacteria indicators. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends *E. coli* as the best indicator of heath risk from water contact in recreational waters and *enterococci* for marine waters.

2. Research affirms the importance dissolved organic carbon (DOC) plays in toxicity of dissolved metals. WSDOT encourages Ecology to consider deriving fresh water dissolved metals criterion based on EPA's biotic ligand model (BLM) in lieu of hardness-only based criteria. Utilizing the BLM would account for the effects of additional water chemistry parameters (e.g., DOC, pH, major ions, and alkalinity) on toxicity to aquatic organisms.

3. WSDOT encourages Ecology to consider taking steps to finalize the Use-Attainability Analysis guidance (UAA) which has been in draft form since 2005. Access to a usable UAA tool is necessary to evaluate the potential to remove nonexisting and/or non-attainable designated uses.

We at WSDOT welcome the opportunity to work with Ecology and other interested parties on these issues as part of the Triennial Review Process. Should you have any questions about these comments, please do not hesitate to contact Larry Schaffner, NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit Coordinator at (360) 570-6657.

Sincerely,

Kenneth M. Stone
Resource Programs Branch Manager

KMS:ls
cc. Richard Gersib, Stormwater & Watersheds Program Manager
Larry Schaffner, NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit Coordinator