



Washington State Association of Counties

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DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

April 2, 2009

Jay Manning, Director
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Director Manning,

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the Commissioner's Policy Advisory Group (PAG) over the last couple of years. We appreciate the efforts you and the Department have made in seeking our opinion and advice in implementing RCW 90.90 (Columbia River Basin Water Supply). Our special appreciation goes to Dan Silver who has done a marvelous job of facilitating the PAG. He is a gem.

I appreciated hearing you speak at the WSAC Rural Issues Committee on March 18th. I was particularly pleased to hear you discuss your wish to continue working collaboratively with county commissioners. The discussion fits in well with a recent task assigned to me by the Commissioner's PAG. The county commissioners have recently updated our charter to reflect our role in effectively advising the Policy Advisory Group. We presently have four members representing 21 counties that are affected by the Columbia River and its tributaries. As we have reflected upon the accountability we have as elected officials representing the several hundreds of thousands people in eastern Washington, and the needs that are present in these difficult economic times, we have unanimously agreed upon the following request:

We ask that a new position, reflecting representation of the watershed planning efforts under RCW 90.82, be added to the Policy Advisory Group. A great deal of state and local effort has been invested into this planning process over the last ten years, and it is critical that this be represented at the PAG to effectively advise on implementation of the Columbia River Management Program projects. Throughout the region, the planning units have made significant contributions to the effectiveness of water management at the local levels. Special expertise has developed that is essential to the success of the PAG in the future. We treasure their inputs and believe strongly that the PAG will greatly benefit from having one of them seated at the table as we move into the next phases of this effort.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Merrill Ott, Stevens County Commissioner and
Chair, Commissioners Policy Advisory Group