CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
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Linda Hoffman, Director
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Lacey, Washington 98504-7600

Dear Ms. Hoffman Linda

I am writing to request that the Department of Ecology (DOE) suspend the current rulemaking related to the Columbia River Initiative (proposed as Chapter 173-565 WAC).

I appreciate the intent of the rulemaking to foster a broader public discussion on the merits of the initiative and to comply with the terms of a settlement agreement with the Columbia-Snake River irrigators. I also understand that DOE never intended to proceed to final rule adoption unless and until the policy bill pending in the Legislature is enacted.

Nonetheless, a number of legislators and other interested parties believe that the rule is premature and should not have been proposed until the Legislature completes its evaluation of the proposed legislation and associated funding requests. For others, the ongoing rulemaking has resulted in confusion and misunderstanding within the legislative process.

I believe it is important for the Legislature to fully and carefully consider the management policies, financial costs, and economic benefits of the initiative, before we move forward with rule development. For this reason, I ask that you cease rulemaking activities and await the final action of the Legislature.

Sincerely,

Chris

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor