

Stillaguamish River Clean Water District Advisory Board

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OCT 13 2014

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October 13, 2014

Dave Somers, Chair
Snohomish County Council
3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 609
Everett, WA 98201

Dear Councilman Somers,

Pursuant to Snohomish County Code Title 25A.30.030, the Stillaguamish River Clean Water District Advisory Board (CWDAB) offers you the following recommendations, requests, and comments that relate to the Snohomish County 2015 Work Program and Budget:

Partial Restoration of Revenue for RCW 90.72 Shellfish Protection Programs

The CWDAB Finance Subcommittee met with Council members, the SWM Director, and Executive Director Crawford to explore options for restoring revenue sufficient for sustainable shellfish protection (RCW 90.72) programs. None were found, but we did discover, in the process, that the stormwater (RCW 36.89) fund balance at the end of 2013 was \$134,000 larger than previously thought.

The Board remains convinced that the best solution is the following, simple amendment to Snohomish County Code Title 25A.20.030(3): "From the funds collected under the authority of chapter 90.72 RCW, and 13.33% of funds collected under the authority of chapter 36.89 RCW pursuant to paragraph 2 above." To ensure dedicated revenue to our clean water and shellfish protection programs, including on-site septic systems, **the Board continues to strongly recommend** adoption of this amendment.

SWM informs us that restoring their funding from the Real and Personal Property Tax (RPPT) would help stretch out their 36.89 funds countywide, as well as providing support for SWM's floodplain projects in the flood, drainage and diking districts. **The Board recommends** restoring RPPT funding to SWM.

We note that the Agricultural Advisory Board, in their September 2, 2014 letter to Council and Executive, has joined us in both of these recommendations.

Snohomish Health District Wastewater Program Capacity

Snohomish Health District (SHD) Wastewater Program staffing is down to four FTEs serving the entire county. While SHD capacity has decreased, the need for SHD involvement in collaborative water quality stewardship has increased.

SHD participation on the CWDAB over the past few years, and in our highly successful on-site-septic (OSS) program, clearly demonstrates the value of their involvement. Sadly, that participation has now been curtailed due to budget issues.

Snohomish County's Lower Stillaguamish Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program as well as the Snohomish County Clean Water Loan and Grant Program, scheduled for launch by the 2nd Quarter of 2015, both rely heavily on SHD technical support.

Washington Department of Health (WDOH) is finalizing a Septic Financing Assessment project that ranks the SHD Wastewater Program near the bottom of 12 Puget Sound local health jurisdictions with respect to the gap between existing, long-term funding and what is needed to fully implement SHD's OSS Management Plan.

SWM has identified available funding from the CWD and WDOH that could be allocated for SHD to add one FTE to the Wastewater Program, allowing SHD to re-engage in the shellfish and water quality protection work for 2015 and 2016. However, the SHD administration must authorize the hiring of a new FTE for this short-term purpose.

The Board offers the following **recommendations**:

1. Include provisions in the 2015 Snohomish County Budget approval process that will allow SWM to work with SHD to develop a short-term funding plan and scope of work enabling SHD to add one FTE to the Wastewater Program for 2015 and 2016.
2. That Council members, through their position on the Board of Health, request joint briefings in early 2015 from SHD, SWM, and WDOH on bridging the identified, long-term funding shortfall in SHD's capacity for shellfish and water quality protection work.

Lake Pollution

The health of residents and visitors who live and recreate on County waters where toxic algae blooms occur is of increasing concern to the Board. Lake Ketchum, which lies within the CWD, requires the posting of health warnings for people and pets more than half the year. Lake Howard has been posted as well in previous years. These algal blooms, resulting from high phosphorous levels in the water, generate both liver and neurological toxins thought to cause chronic illnesses in humans and known to have been fatal to dogs.

The potential for contamination of commercial shellfish beds one mile downstream of Lake Ketchum was so compelling that the Board voted unanimously to grant \$40,000 from its Discretionary Fund toward the \$194,000 aluminum sulfate (alum) treatment that was partially implemented in May 2014 and will be completed in November. Further treatments may be necessary in the future.

The Board encourages the Snohomish County Council to view toxic algae control in our lakes as a health and safety priority. We urge Council to solicit expert advice on the related health issues and how it may be dealt with. **We recommend** that the SHD and SWM continue water quality monitoring and public notifications for toxic algae.

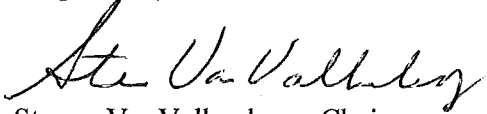
Re-Define Board Member Position

The Board would remind Council of our 2012 and 2013 recommendations for adoption of an amendment to 25A.30.040(a) SCC, to delete the Advisory Board position for "Unincorporated UGA" (an extremely difficult position to fill). In SWM's Rate Ordinance package of amendments, this position would be replaced with a position for the Sauk River, if the CWD is expanded to include that basin, or if no expansion takes place, with a fourth "At Large" position in 25A.30.040(e) SCC. As part of the effort to

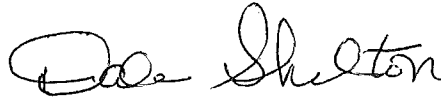
keep Board vacancies to a minimum and promote citizen participation, **the Board again recommends this change.**

The Board thanks you for your attention and welcomes any comments or questions.

Respectfully,



Steven VanValkenburg, Chair



Dale Shelton, Vice Chair

cc:

Lenda Crawford, Executive Director, Snohomish County Executive's Office

Debbie Terwilleger, Director, Snohomish County Surface Water Management

Stephanie Wright, 2014 Chair, Snohomish County Board of Health

Dr. Gary Goldbaum, Snohomish County Health Office, Snohomish Health District

Peter Mayer, Deputy Director, Snohomish Health District

Kevin Plemel, Interim Manager, Environmental Health Division, Snohomish Health District