



JEFFERSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

621 Sheridan Street
Port Townsend, WA 98368
Al Scalf, Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 2, 2011

To: Al Scalf, DCD Director
Stacie Hoskins, Planning Manager
Michelle McConnell, Associate Planner

From: Donna Frostholt, Associate Planner 

SUBJECT: Voluntary Stewardship Program (ESHB 1886 – Agricultural Lands and Critical Areas) – BoCC Direction for Next Steps

ESHB 1886, which pertains to a voluntary stewardship program (VSP) for agricultural lands and critical areas, went into effect on July 22, 2011. The County must now determine whether to opt in or opt out based on requirements specified in ESHB 1886. The following summarizes the process approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) for making the opt in/opt out decision, including watershed selection, based on our discussions with the BoCC yesterday:

1. **Prepare Information about VSP.** DCD will prepare a summary document or white paper that explains the key points of the VSP. This document will provide information about the VSP requirements and identify key points to consider for determining whether Jefferson County should opt in or opt out. This document will also provide information about determining which watersheds to include and which watershed or subbasin should be selected as a priority watershed. DCD expects that the document will be brief in length, and that the document will provide sufficient information for providing meaningful comments.

Due Date: Internal draft completed by DCD by August 4, 2011. Final document will be available no later than the date that the public comment period commences.

2. **Prepare a Public Notice.** DCD staff will prepare a public notice for BoCC review and approval at a Monday morning meeting. The public notice will announce that the County is seeking comments about opting in or opting out of the VSP, watershed selection, and priority watershed determination. The public notice will identify how to provide comments and the date of public hearing before the BoCC. Public comment period will run for 30 days, from August 24 through September 23, 2011.

Due Date: DCD will bring a draft public notice to BoCC on the morning of August 22, 2011, with the intention of submitting the notice to The Leader by 1:00 PM that same day.

3. **Confer with Caucuses.** Jefferson County staff will meet with agricultural, environmental, and tribal stakeholders. BoCC will receive input from these stakeholder caucuses to assist with opt in/opt out decision and watershed selection.

Due Date: Meetings to run concurrently with public notice period.

4. **BoCC Public Hearing.** BoCC anticipates holding a public hearing on September 19, 2011.

5. **Public Comment Reviews.** During the 30-day comment period, Jefferson County will receive public comments and DCD staff will begin compiling public input. DCD will prepare a summary report describing the results of public input and then provide recommendations to the BoCC.

Due Date: DCD will have summary report completed by October 6, 2011.

6. **BoCC Decision.** BoCC will make decision to either opt in or opt out of VSP.

Due Date: BoCC will make decision by October 13, 2011. If BoCC decides that the County will opt in, they may direct DCD staff to begin tasks needed to prepare a resolution reflecting the decision to opt in by January 22, 2012. A UDC amendment may subsequently be needed to reflect the VSP option and would follow a regular Planning Commission process. If the BoCC decides that the County will opt out, they may direct DCD to begin a UDC amendment process to address agricultural development in critical areas within the legislatively mandated timeframe (July 22, 2013).

Planning Commission Involvement:

Yesterday, the Board gave DCD staff direction that the Planning Commission (PC) is not formally tasked with providing a recommendation on opting-in/out of the VSP. That said, they also recognized the high level of interest in the VSP by both the PC and the public that's been attending PC meetings. The Board will welcome and encourage the PC's input to the upcoming public comment period and hearing on VSP (individual comments or a group position if they so choose). Therefore, the PC may invite guest speakers to help educate the PC about the issue, but are not to hold any formal stakeholder workshops or confer with the Tribes about the VSP. The Board indicated appreciation and a high regard for the PC's perspective but wants to avoid creating a dual track process given the statutory timeline and process requirements.