



JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Philip Morley, County Administrator

FROM: Carl Smith, Department of Community Development Director 
Stacie Hoskins, Planning Manager, Shoreline Administrator
Michelle McConnell, Associate Planner, SMP Update Project Manager 

DATE: August 13, 2012

SUBJECT: Response to Ecology 'final action' letter on SMP Update (MLA08-475)

ATTACHED: Draft response letter

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: Consider sending a letter in response to the WA Department of Ecology's call for 'final action' on the SMP Update before the August 15, 2012 deadline identified in Ecology's letter.

ANALYSIS/STRATEGIC GOALS/PROS and CONS:

Ecology's conditional approval of the December 7, 2009 *Locally Approved SMP* was received in January 2011. As the County has prepared to send formal response about the 63 required, recommended and other proposed changes, questions have arisen, specifically about the provisions to regulate in-water finfish aquaculture. Ecology's letter dated July 23, 2012 is in response to the County's recent questions and request for clarification.

Sending a response before the 8/15/12 deadline may serve as a placeholder until the Board makes a decision on what option will be chosen to finalize the SMP Update.

FISCAL IMPACT/COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS:


Grant funding for the SMP Update ended in June 2009. Department of Community Development staff work expends General Fund appropriations from the Department's annual budget to continue work on this project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Board provide direction on final revisions to the response letter and direct staff to send the letter to Ecology.

REVIEWED BY:


Philip Morley, County Administrator


Date



1820 Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Phil Johnson, District 1 David W. Sullivan, District 2 John Austin, District 3

Washington Department of Ecology
Ted Sturdevant, Director
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Mr. Sturdevant,

Thank you for your letter dated July 23, 2012 in response to our questions and request for clarification on issues related to the regulation of in-water finfish aquaculture (marine net pens). We recognize this is the last remaining issue to resolve for final approval of our Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Comprehensive Update. Jefferson County is eager to complete this significant improvement to the protection, use, development and restoration of our local river, lake and marine shoreline resources.

Regarding the August 15 deadline noted in your letter, we want to advise you that we are not able to meet that timeline for a decision due to several logistical challenges:

- Our County Administrator has been out of the office for two weeks;
- Our Planning Manager has been out of the office for two weeks;
- One of our County Commissioners was out of the office for a week; and
- We have scheduled a work session with John Kerwin (WDFW) for Monday, August 27 to better understand existing surveillance and response efforts for fish disease threats.

We will do our best to proceed expeditiously. However, we need to ensure that all key parties are included in continued discussion of the in-water finfish aquaculture issue, and that we have opportunity to confer with the State expert on fish disease monitoring and prevention to consider any new information gained before making a decision on how to move forward.

We hereby request that the time frame for our decision on final action be extended in light of the fact that we are making a diligent good faith effort to resolve the issue. Should we choose Option 2 to include additional environmental analysis, we recognize that your Department needs to commit the funding to ensure that it can get spent this fiscal year or reprogram it to another jurisdiction.

We will continue to coordinate with you and your staff to keep you apprised of our efforts.

Sincerely,

John Austin, Chair

CC: Gordon White, Tom Clingman, Peter Skowlund, Brian Lynn, Paula Ehlers, Jeffree Stewart