

Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of Commissioners
Philip Morley, County Administrator

FROM: Jean Baldwin, Public Health Director
Michael Dawson, Water Quality Lead

DATE: August 22, 2011

RE: Chimacum Stream Gauge Letter to Ecology; No cost.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

A letter to the WA Dept of Ecology recommending the continued operation of the Chimacum Creek stream gauge is proposed; No cost.

ANALYSIS:

Proposed cuts to Ecology's stream gauge network in Jefferson County may have negative impacts on the management of important county water resources. A recent proposal to dismantle the Chimacum Creek flow monitoring station is at odds with local and state priorities for the allocation of limited resources. The purpose of the letter is to request information on the proposed budget cuts, ask for consideration for the potential impacts to the county and other local stakeholders, to assert the importance of the East Jefferson Watershed Council (WRIA 17) recommendations for flow monitoring priorities and to offer local assistance in seeking solutions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No costs are associated with this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

The department recommends board approval of the letter.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT:

Michael Dawson, 385-9444 x301.

Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda

REVIEWED BY:

Philip Morley acting CA
Philip Morley, County Administrator

8-22-12
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

August 27, 2012

Washington State Department of Ecology
Ted Sturtevant
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Mr. Sturtevant,

On August 9, Cynthia Nelson of Shorelands and Environmental Assistance informed us that the Chimacum Creek Stream Flow Monitoring station #17B050 was slated to be discontinued under current Environmental Assessment Program Southwest Region budget cuts. This was surprising to us given that the Chimacum Creek basin is the highest priority basin identified in the WRIA 17 Watershed Management Plan and Detailed Implementation Plan (2011) based on forecasted water availability and demand (see www.ejwc.org for reports). Ecology went through a lengthy process to set a Water Management Rule for the Chimacum Creek basin culminating in 2009.

Chimacum Creek is a small but critical water body to be collecting flow data on. ESA listed summer chum enter Chimacum Creek for spawning during the low flow times of year. The Chimacum basin contains the county's only Urban Growth Area, and as the largest agricultural area, Chimacum is important to the local economy and identity. For all of these reasons, being able to have a continuous data set on Chimacum Creek flows is of primary importance to us.

We have attempted to get more information from Ecology on the process being used to make decisions on which gages to maintain and which must be cut, but have so far been unsuccessful. In addition, we would like to know what options exist for finding solutions to the budget problems. Would help with maintenance and calibration be enough? In the past, county staff assisted Ecology staff in the maintenance of stream gages under Ecology funding, but were told in 2011 to not continue due to budget cuts.

We understand that spending cuts are a reality in many programs, both statewide and locally, but we hope that solutions to the Southwest Region's budget problems don't result in closing the Chimacum gauge. Local options for partnering with Ecology will need time to be developed. We would like to be part of the discussion on options that exist for maintaining this important data set and will be looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,

John Austin, Chairman

Phil Johnson, Member

David Sullivan, Member

cc: Representative Hargrove
 Representative Tharinger
 Representative Van de Wege