



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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January 31, 2019

The Honorable Jim Honeyford
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40415
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Judy Warnick
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40407
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Shelly Short
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40413
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Implementation of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6091

Dear Honorable Senators:

I am writing in response to your January 3, 2019, letter expressing concerns about the representation of agricultural interests on Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committees. The two committees that you specifically addressed are Puget Sound area basins in Watershed Resource Inventory Areas (WRIs) 14 and 15.

As you noted in your letter, Ecology followed a detailed statewide process to set up all of the committees called for by RCW 90.94.030. We designed a committee member selection approach to maximize inclusiveness of local expertise, increase opportunities for local entities to participate in selecting representatives of interests specified in the statute, and establish committees expeditiously so that they could begin their important work quickly.

Specific to WRIs 14 and 15, my staff reached out to a range of local participants, including local farm bureau contacts and local conservation districts, to ensure participation from local agricultural interests. The purpose of this outreach was to invite individuals to self-nominate or nominate others. For WRIA 14, we reached out to a published phone contact, and in WRIA 15 we sent the enclosed e-mail to solicit participation.

After following this process, representatives from the Mason Conservation District and the Kitsap Conservation District were selected and agreed to serve in WRIs 14 and 15,

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respectively. Once selected, committee representatives signed agreements that confirm their understanding of the committee process and their responsibility to engage with the interest they represent. In the case of agricultural representatives, the Mason and Kitsap Conservation District representatives committed to reach out to local agricultural producers and processors, farm bureau members, and farmland owners.

On December 5, 2018, the Mason Conservation District, which ranked number one, decided to step down as a member of the WRIA 14 Committee, as a result of the Washington State Farm Bureau's intervention. Therefore, the Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau, the second-ranked entity for agricultural interests, stepped in to fill the WRIA 14 seat on December 19, 2018.

In WRIA 15, the Kitsap Conservation District (KCD) was the only entity nominated from the watershed to represent agricultural interests. As Ecology understands, the KCD staff and Board include local farm owners and agricultural operators. The KCD representative for WRIA 15 is fully engaged in the planning process and committed to representing a broad range of local agricultural interests.

My staff will provide me status reports of the planning processes in both of these basins. I have asked them to take any necessary actions to ensure local agricultural interests are well represented on these two committees, as well as other committees established across the state.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in Ecology's implementation of the Streamflow Restoration Act. I know your leadership was essential to the passage of this law. I am committed to achieving successful outcomes as envisioned in the law to improve streamflows and address water supply for rural homes.

Sincerely,



Maia D. Bellon
Director

Enclosures [3]