



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Headline: DOE SEEKS MODIFICATION OF MOA

ELLENSBURG, Wash. — Kittitas County Commissioners Alan Crankovich, Paul Jewell and Mark McClain met today to address the latest proposed modifications of the MOA from the Department of Ecology (Ecology). In a letter addressed to Thomas Tebb, Regional Director of the Department of Ecology, the Commissioners requested a meeting to discuss with Ecology why they had proposed additional revisions beyond what was agreed to in our March 26, 2009 meeting.

According to the letter, following the March 26, 2009 dispute resolution meeting Ecology and the County had agreed to have the Assistant Attorney General representing Ecology and a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney address three areas within the MOA: 5,000 gallons per day per 40 acres of land, the use of SEPA to address land division and plat note language.

According to Chairman Alan Crankovich, "Ecology and the County had reached a good faith agreement to address a couple of areas that were challenging to implement and manage under the existing MOA, and contradictory of state code." "There were minor details that required the attorneys to work out when we left the meeting; what Ecology has come back with seems to be significant policy changes and wholesale revisions of our initial agreement, including shifting the costs and enforcement of the state water code to the county," Crankovich added.

"I was frustrated to see such sweeping changes since we had all worked so hard to resolve conflicting language and intent," Commissioner McClain said. McClain, who had voted against the MOA, said, "I was disappointed to see the removal of the provisions which required Ecology to fund the agreement, which had been a significant concern for me from the onset of the MOA."

Commissioner Jewell said, he too was disappointed to see such significant modifications to the agreement and added, “While I had not been a party to the initial agreement, I recognized we needed to do what is in the best interest of the community and believed we had reached an agreement during our March meeting.”

According to the Commissioners’ letter, “Ecology is now proposing removal and modification of several provisions within the agreement. Specifically, the removal of the funding agreement; shifting enforcement to the County to enforce the state water code; requiring the County to pass several ordinances, apparently without public hearings; create a water mitigation bank; require covenants and restrictions on land; require both a source meter and well meter as well as a monitoring program; and pass all of these costs onto our citizens.”

Commissioners have asked for a meeting with Ecology to determine “why Ecology had backed away from its earlier commitments in favor of such epic modifications.” Commissioner Crankovich said.

Commissioners have requested a meeting which has yet to be scheduled.

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