From:	Eric Hirst
To:	Council@co.whatcom.wa.us
Cc:	Jack Louws; Karen Frakes; Gary Davis
Subject:	AB2013-180 Rural Element Update
Date:	Sunday, May 19, 2013 8:20:35 PM

Dear Whatcom County Council,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on AB2013-180 ahead of the public hearing on May 21, 2013 concerning the Rural Element Update.

My comments are based on a belief that the county must follow state law. In particular, Whatcom County must follow the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), which has been in place for more than two decades (since 1990). Similarly, the county must obey orders issued by the Growth Management Hearings Board.

It is important to remember that the GMA has 14 goals, only one of which relates to protection of private property-rights. Other goals, which the county's Rural Element Update appears to ignore, include:

> "Encourage development in urban areas"
> "Reduce sprawl"
> "Encourage efficient multimodal transportation"
> "Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries"
> "Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities" and
> "Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water."

From a policy perspective, I urge the council to pass a rural-element ordinance that:

> Maintains clear distinctions between urban and rural areas
> Concentrates growth inside cities, not in the county
> Protects water supplies for all county residents and ecosystems (not just for developers), Protects water quality (e.g., by limiting the amount of impervious surfaces for development)
> Protects agricultural lands from inappropriate development
> Limits the size of LAMIRDs based on state law and the amount and types of development as of 1990.

Generally, I favor the Department of Planning and Development Services staff recommendations and oppose those offered by the planning commission.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Eric

Eric Hirst
1932 Rhododendron Way
Bellingham, WA 98229

☎ 360-656-6690 💻 EricHirst@comcast.net