

FEBRUARY 17, 2009 PUBLIC COMMENT AT JOINT PUBLIC HEARING

My name is Amy Mower, Silver Lake Road, Maple Falls. I am speaking tonight on behalf of Foothills Friends, a large citizens group.

You have FHF's Feb 14 letter in hand; please read that detailed letter.

I will make three points:

Point Number 1. FHF supports **OFM's lowest 2031 pop projection of approximately 220,000**. We urge that the CC listen to the public input from surveys and workshops. The largest number of participants urge that you choose projections lower than the 251,000 suggested by the GMCC. 220,000 is the right number. In this time of economic crisis it would be irresponsible to choose otherwise.

Point Number 2. FHF urges that if the **Columbia Valley** were to stay a UGA, it should be part of the EIS process **along with all other UGAs** in the County. The Columbia Valley needs a complete EIS, not merely the 2008 SEIS.

a) The 2008 SEIS did not include many of the issues addressed in the Scoping Document for the 10-year UGA Review. I won't list them all, but just one jumps out...air quality. That is a big health issue in the Columbia Valley. Particulate matter, wood stoves, a pall of blue smoke hangs over the valley during temperature inversions. But the County did not look into this issue in 2008, so along with the rest of the UGAs, air quality must be reviewed for Columbia Valley. There are other new EIS issues listed in the FHF letter.

b) In addition, there are many issues that should have been included in the 2008 SEIS but were not. For example:

- a pending investigation of an old land fill
- a quantitative ground water analysis
- the LOS capacity of the county and state roads, not merely intersections

We urge you to address these and the other points listed in FHF's letter.

Point Number 3. But the most important issue for FHF was addressed in our earlier letters:

We support the Planning Commission's 5-2 vote to convert the Columbia Valley UGA TO a LAMIRD. That vote was the best decision for the rural area and the future of Whatcom County. A LAMIRD is best for Columbia Valley **regardless** of the County-wide population projections. We urge the County Council to confirm that vote. The planning tools are there for Columbia Valley LAMIRDS that will serve the residents' needs. **We challenge you to use those tools and to do what is best for the County.** Thank you.

