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LONG RANGE
PLANNING DIVISION

January 10, 2008

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To: David Stalheim, Director via email
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
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Re: WHATCOM COUNTY GIVES PUBLIC NOTICE OF DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE (DS) AND ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT (SEP2007-00181) Date December 27th, 2007

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROPOSAL: Adoption of Foothills Subarea Plan and related Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendments.

I would like to make comment for public record regarding the Determination of Significance and ask to be a party of record for notice of any future actions regarding the proposed Foothills Subarea.

On review of the distribution list for notice included with documents available at County offices I am concerned the Washington State Department of Ecology is not on this list. In addition the list has eliminated many stakeholders notified on previous EIS for this area of the County.

I understand the process followed surrounding a supplementary EIS (WAC197-11-620), my concern lies in that the referred document (SEP99-00073) DNS does not reflect 9 years of scientific and social-economic change in recognition of the area and Canadian population shifting causing increase on the aquifers that are continually referred to as unknowns through 35 years of County documents.

The question of Senior Water rights is also an issue that seems to be left on the table.

Projections of population have been proposed with wide variance in conceptual need.

I realize The County is ordered to achieve compliance with the Growth Management Act in accordance with the final decision and order (Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board gmhb.wa.gov/western/decisions/2007/07-2-0009WiesenOrderonPetitionersMotion20070827) no later than February 25, 2008. The County must complete its review of its UGA boundaries and densities within them, and any revisions, if necessary, to accommodate the succeeding twenty years of growth by February 25, 2008. (RCW 36.70A.130(3)).

Through out every environmental review from the 1973; An environmental Assessment of Peaceful Valley, A Recreational Subdivision in Columbia Valley, Whatcom County proposal for *recreational sub division* (which was accepted) to the current Foothills proposal, the resounding public request is rural, resource and recreational for this area to have some form of sustainable outside resource and preservation. The portrayal of this area as an UGA was based on prior short-sited platting for *recreational purpose* for a seasonal population and the misguided conclusions based on mapping rather than what is on the ground.

It has been referred to as “unfortunate” by the Washington State Department of Ecology as the area was identified in landscape survey as an area of high resource value for restoration. State Highways that where questioned and considered problematic in 1973 (page 122 of “73”study) still remain unsolved and lack funding or scheduling for resolution.

Recognition of impact has been reflected in the Whatcom County Critical areas ordinance of 2005. Rezoning of areas that previously have been established as open space to high density UGA appears misplaced. Establishing roadway demands for non-central location for future industrial invites public safety issues. Regional Centers require funding for what exists not speculative population demands. Utilizing and maintaining well-funded existing infrastructure and under utilized industrial areas in other parts of the County will establish compliance with the GMA and become a model for future potential housing solutions.

The County, by establishing future demand on this aquifer seemingly indemnifies the rest of the established Agricultural over lays and UGA s down stream to support future water needs of an increased population and subsequent degradation of this essential water resource. The proposed repeal of the 1988 Foothills Subarea plan needs to be revisited.

I am pleased there has been recognition and a Determination of Significance assigned this sub area plan. Re assessment of past electoral perception is an essential form of planning.

Respectfully submitted,

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