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To: <dstalheim@co.whatcom.us>
CC: <MAamot@co.whatcom.wa.us>
Date: 9/10/2008 7:40 PM
Subject: Comment of Foothills Draft SEIS

Dear Director Stalheim,

I am writing to provide my public input regarding the Foothills SEIS.

First of all, I am concerned that the process has gone badly awry. It has become highly politicized with the minority group creating unreasonable fear and commanding far more attention than the genuine growth issues are receiving. I want to live in a community that works for everyone. I value our rural character and would like to help preserve it. At the same time, we have an urban population that needs services. I fear that the current political direction will give us neither.

I watched the local sub-area planning committee as it worked. The committee was populated with a very representative group of citizens. The members are intelligent, informed and hard working. I am dismayed by the way their hard work has been derailed by a subversion of their process. It does not inspire confidence in the county that this was allowed to happen.

I am also dismayed that the traffic figures in the SEIS are based on the assumption that virtually everyone in the Foothills will be driving to Bellingham for employment and clogging the highway. The days of this kind of shortsighted thinking need to end. This community cannot survive under that outdated model. Incomes are too low and cost of transportation is becoming too high to allow it. We see that we need to create our own jobs from the grassroots. Significant efforts are already underway to make that happen. We are also busy networking with Sumas and Everson to promote cross-community hiring that is not dependent on the Mt. Baker Highway.

Of the three proposals suggested, I strongly support option one. It is consistent with years of planning done by this community. It allows growth to be concentrated so we can preserve the rural character in our other areas. The addition of a commercial area in the Columbia Valley will provide us with an opportunity to reverse the deplorable conditions in that area. We can fight the poverty there, but not without meeting basic needs for access to employment, healthy food and medical services.

Our community is strong and active. We are working to solve many of our own problems. The UGA with a commercial district is only one piece in a larger puzzle - but it is a critical piece. Please do your work with reasonable facts and not by yielding to the kind of political pressure that was allowed to drive the public comment process last week.

Sincerely,

Linda Dorsett

Silver Lake Resident

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