



Open Letter to Citizens of Point Roberts

RE. Cancellation of Points Recycling and Refuse, LLC Garbage Collection Certificate

Dear Community Member:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate Whatcom County's response to the pending cancellation of garbage collection services at Point Roberts. Yesterday, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) granted a Points Recycling and Refuse, LLC request to suspend garbage collection as of July 1, 2009.

Solid waste collection is a highly regulated private enterprise that is governed by state law and overseen by the WUTC. Commercial solid waste collection companies must qualify for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity by WUTC in order to provide collection services. Certification is required so that WUTC can ensure that collection is performed by companies capable of delivering satisfactory service at fair and equitable rates. **Whatcom County does not certify collection companies or provide collection services.**

WUTC is currently soliciting applications from prospective companies to collect garbage and recycling at Point Roberts. As of Wednesday, June 17, the WUTC had received no applications for a certificate. One party from Point Roberts has communicated its intent to apply.

Whatcom County owns the **Johnson Road transfer station**. The County has historically leased the landfill to the certified garbage collection company serving the Point Roberts franchise area. The County's ability to stipulate the terms and conditions of the transfer station lease allows the County to influence operation of the facility. Through that mechanism, Whatcom County Public Works can work to provide uninterrupted service at the facility.

To that end, Whatcom County Public Works intends to secure the services of Point Recycling and Refuse at the transfer station temporarily during the transition in collection service. It is our current plan that the temporary lease will remain in effect until a solid waste collection company is certified to operate in the Point Roberts franchise area, or for six months, whichever is sooner. If no collection company is certified by September 1, 2009, the County will prepare a Request for Qualifications and select a qualified firm to operate the transfer station under a long-term lease.

Residents should **arrange to self-haul garbage and recycling to the transfer station beginning July 1, 2009 and thereafter**, unless and until a qualified collection company is certified by WUTC to serve Point Roberts.

Continued curbside collection at Point Roberts depends on success of the private sector. My staff and I have met with several certified collection companies to explore ways to reduce the operational barriers to service at the Point. The principal barriers are (1) turnaround time for solid waste disposal (garbage cannot be imported to Canada, so containers must be transported to Bellingham through two border crossings), (2) the small number of collection customers, and (3) recent contraction of recycling markets. There are no ready solutions to these problems; however, I will continue to work with industry and the community towards a more sustainable business environment.

Information about solid waste collection at Point Roberts will be posted on the Whatcom County Solid Waste website beginning Monday, June 22. The site will be updated as new information comes available. Please direct your browser to <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/publicworks/solidwaste/>.

Respectfully,



Frank Abart, Director
Whatcom County Public Works

Cc. The Honorable Pete Kremen, Whatcom County Executive
Whatcom County Council
Regina Delahunt, Director, Whatcom County Health Department
David Danner, Director, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission