



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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April 3, 2018

The Honorable Jack Louws  
Whatcom County  
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 108  
Bellingham, WA 98225

**Re: Whatcom County Shoreline Master Program Amendment – Conditional Approval, Resolution Number 2016-039**

Dear Executive Louws:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Whatcom County (County) for its efforts in developing the proposed amendments to the Shoreline Master Program (SMP). It is obvious that a significant effort was invested by your staff and engaged community to address the increasing use of single-family residences as short-term vacation rentals.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) finds the County's SMP amendments are consistent with the policy and procedural requirements of the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971 and the SMP Guidelines. However, Ecology has worked extensively with County staff to prepare recommended changes to provide further clarity, based on questions that arose during the local and state public comment periods. These recommendations are included in Attachment B – Ecology Recommended Changes. Ecology's findings and conclusions related to the County's proposed SMP amendment are contained in Attachment A.

Pursuant to RCW 90.58.090(2)(e), at this point, the County may:

- Agree to the proposed recommended changes, or
- Submit an alternative proposal. Ecology will then review each alternative submitted for consistency with the purpose and intent of the changes originally submitted by Ecology with the SMA.



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Pursuant to RCW 90.58.090(2)(e), the County must notify Ecology if the recommended changes are approved or denied. Please provide your written response within 30-days to the Director's Office at the following address:

Washington State Department of Ecology  
Attention: Director's Office  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-6700

Final Ecology approval will occur after the County responds to Ecology communicating the County's decision on the recommended changes. Ecology's final approval will be in the form of a letter, and will be sent upon receipt of the County's written notification that the recommended changes are acceptable to the County, or after the County and Ecology have reached agreement on alternative changes.

The SMP will be effective 14-days from the date of Ecology's final action. This 14-day period was established by legislative action in 2011 and is intended to provide lead time for the County to prepare to implement the SMP amendment.

Ecology is required to publish a newspaper notice that the County's SMP has received final approval. The publication of this notice, in the form of a legal ad, will begin a 60-day appeal period. Ecology will provide a copy of the legal ad to the County for its records.

Thank you again for your efforts. We look forward to receiving your written response and concluding this SMP amendment in the near future. If you have any questions or would like to discuss Ecology's recommended changes, please contact our regional planner, Chad Yunge at [chad.yunge@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:chad.yunge@ecy.wa.gov) or at (360) 255-4374.

Sincerely,



Maia D. Bellon  
Director

Enclosures (3)

By Certified Mail [91 7108 2133 339 7125 5115]

cc: Cliff Strong, Whatcom County Planning & Development Services  
Joe Burcar, Ecology  
Chad Yunge, Ecology