



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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July 29, 2019

The Honorable Norm Childress  
Chair, Lower Yakima Valley GWMA Advisory Committee  
Yakima County Commissioner  
128 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Yakima, WA 98901

**RE: Request to Certify the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Program**

Dear Commissioner Norm Childress:

After careful review and many years of partnership with Yakima County, I am pleased to grant the request of the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to certify the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Program (Program). The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) certification of this Program to reduce nitrate in drinking water based on the additional conditions provided herein, is done in accordance with Chapter 173-100 WAC.

The Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area was created at the request of Yakima County. The Advisory Committee was formed in 2012 and has been diligently developing a plan to help meet drinking water standards in the Lower Yakima Valley, where elevated levels of nitrate exist in groundwater.

The effort led by Yakima County, and guided by the Advisory Committee, including residents, stakeholders, and affected government entities, finalized the Program and submitted a request for certification to Ecology on June 20, 2019.

The Program provides a technically sound set of best management practices, education and outreach efforts, technology based actions, and inter-agency coordination initiatives. Implementation of these tools and actions will begin addressing the reduction of nitrate in groundwater within the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area.

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This certification confirms that the Program seeks “to forge a partnership between a diversity of local, state, tribal and federal interests in cooperatively protecting the state's groundwater resources” to meet the purposes of the Groundwater Management Area Act regulations (WAC 173-100-010).

We congratulate you and the Advisory Committee on completing this body of work. Your collective efforts are very important to the diverse communities of the Lower Yakima Valley. We support coordinated early implementation of the Program while long-term funding sources are identified to administer specific project actions.

The Program also identifies an Executive Committee comprised of representatives of governmental entities and various industries with either the authority or knowledge and ability to lead implementation of the 64 recommendations agreed to by the Advisory Committee. Immediate and coordinated engagement of the Executive Committee to identify a lead entity, and pursue the necessary expertise and funding to implement the Program is crucial to the success of this initiative.

Pursuant to Chapter 173-100 WAC, certification of the Ground Water Management Areas and the Program is conditioned to require that the Executive Committee:

- 1) Identify and name a lead entity and describe specific duties (Scope of Work) to implement the goals and recommendations of the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area Program.
- 2) Submit a prioritized implementation schedule to Ecology on or before May 31, 2020, including but not limited to deadlines for accomplishment of the Program's recommended actions, responsibilities to seek funding, and recommended implementation priorities.
- 3) Seek funding, identify and support opportunities via a study of water supply alternatives, consistent with recommendations 33 and 44, to provide immediate assistance to residents within the Groundwater Management Area boundary whose drinking water nitrate levels are consistently above the EPA safe drinking water standard of 10 mg/L in their private domestic wells.

#### **YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL**

You have a right to appeal this decision to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) within 30 days of the date of receipt of this certification. The appeal process is governed by Chapter 43.21B RCW and Chapter 371-08 WAC. “Date of receipt” is defined in RCW 43.21B.001(2).

To appeal you must do all of the following within 30 days of the date of receipt of this certification:

- File your appeal and a copy of this certification with the PCHB (see addresses below). Filing means actual receipt by the PCHB during regular business hours.
- Serve a copy of your appeal and this certification on Ecology in paper form - by mail or in person. (See addresses below.) E-mail is not accepted.

You must also comply with other applicable requirements in Chapter 43.21B RCW and Chapter 371-08 WAC.

**ADDRESS AND LOCATION INFORMATION**

<b>Street Addresses</b>	<b>Mailing Addresses</b>
<b>Department of Ecology</b> Attn: Appeals Processing Desk 300 Desmond Drive SE Lacey, WA 98503	<b>Department of Ecology</b> Attn: Appeals Processing Desk PO Box 47608 Olympia, WA 98504-7608
<b>Pollution Control Hearings Board</b> 1111 Israel RD SW STE 301 Tumwater, WA 98501	<b>Pollution Control Hearings Board</b> PO Box 40903 Olympia, WA 98504-0903

We again congratulate all involved in developing a Program and the ongoing local commitment to implement and improve groundwater quality conditions of the Lower Yakima Valley.

Sincerely,



Heather R. Bartlett  
Water Quality Program Manager

