



Kittitas County, Washington

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KITTITAS COUNTY ANNOUNCES PUBLIC HEARING ON EXEMPT WELL RESTRICTIONS

ELLENSBURG, Wash. – Kittitas County Commissioners have announced a public hearing has been scheduled for Thursday, August 13 to consider the final versions of an Amended Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Ecology and a proposed Partnership Rule. Late last week Ecology provided the documents to the County that will end the temporary moratorium imposed on all wells in upper Kittitas County by Ecology Director Jay Manning on July 16.

The documents being presented are the result of ongoing discussions between County legal staff and Ecology. “We actually received the negotiated documents late on Friday afternoon,” Commissioner Paul Jewell stated. “We each had the opportunity to review the amended MOA and rule over the weekend and agree the final product is ready for public review and comment. Before making any final decisions, we want to make sure the citizens have time to review a complete document and the voices of those most affected will have the opportunity to be heard.”

The current MOA and proposed rule received by the County from Ecology differ significantly from the original agreement signed by both parties in April 2008. It is the result of “long hours of conversation and debate by both sides” commented Commissioner Alan Crankovich. “This has been an exhaustive effort and it recently seemed to be all in vain. Throughout the process we have been diligently pursuing a reasonable solution and I believe we may have turned the corner. We each made some compromises, but I’m sure Ecology will agree with me that this is an overall better agreement.”

Commissioners have scheduled another meeting with representatives from Ecology for Monday, August 3 to discuss how Ecology will participate in the public process that is necessary to move the agreement forward. “I believe we are all looking forward to settling this issue now so that the groundwater study can begin and we will get the data necessary for making sound decisions in the future,” added Commissioner Mark McClain.

The public hearing will be conducted at the Upper Kittitas County District Court, 700 East First Street, Cle Elum at 6:30 PM on Thursday August 13, 2009. Documents can be viewed on the County website, at Upper Kittitas County District Court, the Commissioner’s Office at the Kittitas County Courthouse, 205 W. 5th Ave. in Ellensburg or at the Community Development Services office 411 North Ruby, Ellensburg.

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