



KITITITAS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

411 N. Ruby St., Suite 2, Ellensburg, WA 98926

CDS@CO.KITITITAS.WA.US

Office (509) 962-7506

Fax (509) 962-7682

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2008

The Kittitas County Board of Commissioners took action today to release for public review and comment the “Memorandum of Agreement” with the State of Washington Department of Ecology regarding management of exempt ground water wells in upper Kittitas County.

The agreement is intended to establish the framework for management of exempt ground water well use in Upper Kittitas County. It reflects the mutual commitment of Kittitas County and the Department of Ecology to evaluate issues related to exempt ground water well use in the county and seek effective solutions as warranted.

The Memorandum of Agreement addresses several provisions which include:

- The initiation of an upper county ground water study intending to focus on the portions of Kittitas County that are not being fully addressed in the current USGS ground water study of the Yakima Basin. The Department of Ecology continues to work with the Governor’s office and the Washington State Legislature to secure funding for the study.
- Development of a long term Management Program based on factual data that will be developed from the ground water study.
- The development of a mitigation program to offset water resource impacts, if any, associated with exempt well use.
- Utilize existing water management measures and develop new interim water management measures. These would include data collection, notice to prospective buyers and developers regarding the potential limitations of ground water supplies, educational materials for existing well users, technical assistance from the Department of Ecology, and exempt well residential development standards within the upper county ground water study area.

In taking this action to release the MOA to the public for comment Commissioner Crankovich stated, “The Draft MOA continues to demonstrate Kittitas County’s commitment to be proactive regarding the issue of ground water management. This action represents a measured approach with cooperation between agencies to examine the issues and concerns, develop a ground water study that will separate fact from speculation, and move forward with meaningful and well considered solutions that will benefit the citizens of Kittitas County.”

Commissioner David Bowen added, “Kittitas County has undertaken a number of steps in recent years relating to ground water management. We have utilized the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to address cumulative impacts of ground water withdrawals, we have developed an extensive data base of exempt wells and mapped them in our GIS system, and when appropriate have required metering of certain exempt wells. We have worked effectively within the framework of existing laws and codes. This action represents another proactive step on behalf of Kittitas County to appropriately manage our water resources.”

DARRYL PIERCY, DIRECTOR

ALLISON KIMBALL, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

COMMUNITY PLANNING • BUILDING INSPECTION • PLAN REVIEW • ADMINISTRATION • PERMIT SERVICES • CODE ENFORCEMENT • FIRE INVESTIGATION

Commission Chairman Mark McClain concluded by saying, “While I continue to be opposed to DOE’s validation of a petition from two exempt well users who are using this process to promote their agenda with absolutely no evidence of impairment, I do recognize, and agree, we need a water study and Kittitas County cannot accomplish this without DOE’s assistance. I voted against the agreement in principle and would appreciate hearing from those in the water industry and from those with scientific information to share their thoughts as I make my decision regarding the Draft Memorandum of Agreement”

Copies of the Draft Memorandum of Agreement are available at Kittitas County Community Development, 411 North Ruby Street, Ellensburg, WA or can be downloaded at <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/cds/current/>

###