



Nisqually River Council

12501 Yelm Highway • Olympia WA 98513 • (360) 438-8715

Council Membership

Pierce County
Thurston County
Lewis County
Cities of Yelm, Eatonville & Roy
Tacoma Power
UW Pack
Experimental Forest
WA Dept. of Natural Resources
WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
WA Dept. of Ecology
WA Parks & Recreation Commission
Lewis, Pierce, & Thurston Conservation Districts
WA Secretary of State
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Mount Rainier National Park
Nisqually River Citizens Advisory Committee
Puget Sound Partnership

March 22, 2017

Thurston County Board of Commissioners
Thurston County Courthouse
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Olympia WA, 98502

Dear Board of Commissioners,

The Nisqually River Council (NRC) would like to provide comments for your consideration of the proposed docket for 2017. We understand that you are looking at two proposals to modify the long standing Nisqually Sub Area Plan under the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan. We are supportive of a collaborative and inclusive effort to update the Plan and encourage the Board to take this on as a priority for 2017.

The Nisqually River Council was formed in 1987 and is the oldest watershed Council west of the Mississippi. The NRC's mission is to create sustainability in the Nisqually Watershed for current and future generations by developing a common culture of environmental, social and economic balance. We have 25 members, including tribal, federal, state and local governments, non-profits, and private citizens.

The Nisqually Sub Area plan was developed in the early 1990s through a collaborative process involving multiple stakeholders, members of the Council, and representatives from the Nisqually Indian Tribe. This plan has been in place since 1992 and many of its elements have been implemented, most notably the protection of the agricultural character and economy of the Nisqually valley through the acquisition and transfer of development rights. The successful implementation of the Sub Area plan over the past 27 years is a testament to the inclusive process in its development and the vision expressed by its authors.

We support the use of adaptive management and the best available science to guide our activities in the Nisqually and agree that it is time for a review of this Plan. Our support for this effort is based on a significant role for the NRC in reviewing, proposing updated guidance, and approval of an updated plan prior to consideration by the Board. We bring a high level of expertise on the issues that are important in this area and provide a means for significant public engagement.

It is important to note that we do not support a narrow review of a proposal to modify the plan relative to recycled asphalt. The plan is a multifaceted plan with significant interconnections between goals and actions. A narrow consideration may have unintended consequences that can be avoided through a complete adaptive management look at the entire plan.

Finally, an undertaking of this importance and magnitude will require a significant dedication of resources by the County and the Council. We are experiencing significant funding constraints and this addition to our work-plan does not come without added costs. We would appreciate the opportunity to explore the possibility of providing the Council with some additional resources to make this process a success. Thank you for this opportunity to comment and we look forward to working with you and your staff on this project. Please feel to contact me at 360-456-5221.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Troutt", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

David A. Troutt
Chair