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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES - PLANNING DIV.

January 20, 2002



Snohomish County Department of Planning
& Development Services
3000 Rockefeller Ave, M/S 604
Everett, WA 98201-4064
Attn. Tom Niemann, Principal Planner

Dear Mr. Niemann,

The current Snohomish land use management plan, and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement are, in my opinion as an economist, poorly planned, environmentally destructive, socially damaging and fiscally irresponsible.

It is my understanding, from information provided by Snohomish County, that the sites being considered are only those which are considered economically viable, presumably to the County as well as the State of Washington. Unfortunately, it seems that somewhere it has been decided that economic viability can be determined without examining any specific costs, or impacts. While there has been some attempt on the part of the experts and consultants (Huckell/Weinman Associates, 2000) to inventory locations that have what appears to be an abundance of resource and notable proximity to thoroughfares, those same experts have either been restrained from, or unable to quantify the impacts of traffic, air/noise/water pollution, loss of recreation land, loss of natural habitat, quality of life impacts on existing citizenry, etc. The problem that arises here is that either these consultants were unable to quantify the costs/impact, in which case they are hardly up to the task of quantifying the resource, or they were in fact restrained from estimating the costs/impacts. This second alternative troubles me even more than the first. Of what interest could it be to the County to turn a blind eye to the specifics of the negative impacts on the County?

Mr. Niemann, you were confronted on this very train of thought at the Monroe forum, and you replied that you had quantified the cost, only without specific numbers. Costs cannot be quantified without numbers. Without numbers it is a smoke and mirror show that is being sold to the public. They are being sold on the wonders of the gravel resources without being informed of the impact to their commutes, the safety of their childrens bicycle lessons, the serenity of their wedding services, or the fouling of their wells and rivers. This approach may, as you asserted, comply with the letter of the law, but I assert that one of our esteemed lawmakers has clearly written a law that is void of

rational thought, or ethical consideration. Consequently, it should not be simply met by you, but rather exceeded on all accounts. That is the trust that you, the County Council, and the Planning Commission has from the citizenry. Good enough, is not good enough.

Further on this train of thought, it is my assumption that that these costs/impacts will eventually need to be quantified, in order to calculate mitigation costs. After repeated questioning I have not received any explanation of how or when that this will occur, only that that is not the concern of this point of the process. At the same time there are numerous parcels which your staff has identified for virtually automatic (fast track) approval during the permitting process. Since no one seems to know where costs will be calculated for mitigation, and they would need to be determined before permits were issued, then it seems likely that they would be calculated during the permit process. How will the county permit department assess impacts and required mitigation fees, where your experts were unable to? How will they adequately calculate the impact of two, three or four simultaneous mining projects on the County, when this review that is examining all of the potential sites is not able to identify the compounding impacts of these projects?

There was made, at your recent community meeting in Monroe, the contention by one of your staffers, that this DSEIS should be of comfort to Snohomish County residents as we will all know where we stand. I assert to you that it is not. Recently the Department of Natural Resources pursued developing a mining project in Sultan. The paperwork and research that they produced was of an abysmal quality. It ignored the research compiled during the development of the recent Granite Falls project and airbrushed potential problems and concerns. The DNR demonstrated in their uncooperative stance that they were not concerned with the impacts on Snohomish County, or its residents, but rather with their own ends. They have put their project on hold, pending the findings of your project. In its present condition, with no real quantifications or mitigation requirements in place, your project will serve only to rubberstamp the desires of the DNR. Worse yet, it will rubberstamp the shortsighted intentions of internationally owned companies that have no vested interest or concern with the impacts on our County. If the Snohomish County Council and Planning Commission cannot stand firm in defense of the county, to the chagrin of the DNR and gravel company attorneys, then is it reasonable to expect a permitting clerk to do so? Your responsibility does not end at identifying potential, but extends to examining feasibility and impacts. Be certain that the potential buyers of these resources are doing exactly that, only they are concerned with the impacts that they are required to be concerned with, and will obfuscate all others.

We are sitting here with the proverbial wolves at the door. You hold the key in your hand. Submitting this proposal, as it stands, with no safeguards, would be no less than opening the door. It is not too late to fix this plan, to accurately and completely describe the costs, and assign them, as the case may be. The state has made assurances that there will be no consequence to delaying a conclusion, so long as progress is being made. Follow the lead of King County on this, and do not sell the County to the lowest bidder.

For a further listing of the costs that you will find your buyers reticent to acknowledge I refer you to the enclosed materials which I sent to the DNR last year. My concerns with

the Sultan Powerhouse project have never been addressed. I did not have the power to force answers, but you do at the present time, and only this project can preserve that power. My concerns, ranging from water quality, to safety, to endangered species, to cost-shifting onto the DOT, were met with an oral "pat on the head". The County Council and Planning Commission will be met with the same response in the future, if you do not require more from the start.

I would appreciate a response to my letter, and my concerns, enumerating how and when these costs will be determined and assessed.

Sincerely,



Denice Ingalls