

# SNOHOMISH COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Rick Williams

December 30, 2002

To: The Councils of the following cities:

City of Duvall,  
City of Snohomish,  
City of Gold Bar, City of Index  
City of Arlington,  
City of Darrington,  
City of Sultan,  
City of Monroe,  
and the Snohomish County Council.

Copies to U.S. Representatives Jennifer Dunn and Rick Larson.

## **SUBJECT : WILD SKY WILDERNESS PROPOSAL**

To those who are trusted with the responsibilities of local government,

The board of the Snohomish County Farm Bureau has been aware of the "Wild Sky Wilderness Proposal" for sometime and our members have been asking us pertinent questions. These should be answered before our Board can fully support or oppose this far reaching proposal to declare over 100,000 acres to be a wilderness area forever. We are enclosing all pertinent information regarding this proposal.

Our reading of the documents shows the following facts, which are somewhat hidden in the legalese of Bill writing:

Over 100,000 acres of mostly previous National Forest will be transferred into a Wilderness area protected **forever**, which will not be subject to future administrative changes in the use of the land.

The Act does not allow timber harvesting, hunting, temporary roads or permanent roads. For all practical purposes there will be no mining or gathering of forest products of any kind. There shall be no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport and no structure or installation within any such area.

Title 16, Chapter 23, Sec.1133 (b) states it pretty well: "**Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purpose of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical use.**"

The Chapter provides that any exceptions may be permitted "subject to such restrictions as the Secretary of Agriculture deems desirable" or "if such activity is carried on in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment" !

When it comes to grazing of livestock, the use of water resources, reservoirs and other facilities, these will be subject to the opinion of the Secretary of Agriculture, "when they are deemed necessary" and if the use "will better serve the interest of the United States and the people thereof than will its denial".

The Act will close or decommission 30 miles of road and provides no trails for access. The Act is very ambiguous about this issue. The Act talks about: "accessible in all seasons of the year to users of various kinds, such as hunters, anglers. The Act talks about a trail plan, but not about the construction of trails.

Some hard questions have to be asked:

- 1. With the magnitude of such proposal has there been an Environmental Impacts Statement filed ?**
- 2. Was there any public hearing in any of the cities or Counties affected by this proposal ?**
- 3. What is the economic impact of closing 30 miles of road ?**
- 4. How are disabled Americans able to enjoy the scenery if they can not enter the area?**
- 5. What are the potential future impacts of eliminating this area for water resources or water storage ?**

There are other issues which need answers :

- The proponents claim: "The Wild Sky Wilderness proposal is the result of more than two years of discussion and negotiation with the local community". Which local communities ?
- Why are there only three local people supporting this proposal, in contrast to about 60 environmental organizations from all over the State of Washington ?
- There are about 27 elected officials, who support this proposal but only one is representative of the area involved: Rick Larsen. Does it really carry a lot of weight when council members and commissioners from as far as Spokane and Bellingham as well as Whatcom County and King County, support this Act, while Snohomish County Council is left in the dark ?
- Why are we doing this and who benefits from this proposal and who is losing out ?
- What will it cost and who is paying for it ?

We as the Snohomish County Farm Bureau Board would like to hear from you, if your council is supportive of this proposal and if public hearings have been held. If no public hearing has been held, will you hold one ? With many of our members living in the affected areas, we would appreciate your response.

Sincerely,



John Postema

President Snohomish County Farm Bureau