

City of Pasco – Oral Testimony

Good afternoon, my name is Chelsea Hagger. I'm here today to offer public comment on behalf of the City of Pasco.

The City of Pasco became aware of the proposed rulemaking back in November 2016, and initially we, along with 4 other publicly owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities in Washington State, got together and looked at the proposed rules. Initially, we were under the impression the DOE rulemaking would allow these five municipalities to become eligible for a couple of seawater grants and low interest loan funding sources, and we are supportive of that. We have kind of watched our business come through the process and we are aware that now the FAC has moved forward with recommending that these 5 municipalities do not become eligible. So, I am here today to offer a little bit of information about the City of Pasco and urge the DOE to reconsider and potentially make that change through the final rule making.

So, Pasco's publicly owned industrial treatment works facility serves as the mechanism for supporting the City's economic growth and development specifically pertaining to the regions ag and processing industry, but by providing an affordable and effective means to treat and recycle processed wastewater the City has drawn large ag industry leaders to the area, in turn creating jobs and bolstering the region's economic vitality. Today, the ag processing industry employs around 1,000 people near Pasco. Additionally, as the market has developed and evolved, many processors have sought facility and operational expansion in addition to newcomers requesting access to the program. The City of Pasco is currently unable to support these growth efforts due to limiting nature of the facilities capacity. Pasco would put considerable effort and resources into a study that may pave a brighter path forward to meet this increasing need. This comprehensive study will evaluate new uses such as residential irrigation, and industrial use. Ultimately, state funding will be vital to the successful implementation of the study and the way that it fosters economic growth and vitality, provides jobs and meets the environmental standards set forth by the DOE. Additional state grant opportunities would encourage additional food and agricultural processing businesses to invest in Eastern Washington communities and would bring more jobs to the area.

The City of Pasco urges your continued consideration of this issue and hopes that the DOE will act to make Pasco, and others alike, eligible for additional state water infrastructure funding.

Thank you for your time.