

Jennifer Lutz

I am writing urging you to establish "A Puget Sound No Discharge Zone" making it illegal to dump sewage within Puget Sound (which includes all waters within Skagit County). These waters are so vital to the organisms that live there, as well as the economy and culture of our area! Puget Sound and surrounding waters are beautiful, vibrant waterways, but, they are not healthy. Both salmon and orca are indicator species and the declining numbers of both of these species is telling us these bodies of water are not healthy. Both of these species are listed "threatened", though technically, by the numbers their numbers are so low they are endangered species. These species have several challenges and clean habitats are one of them. Both of these species are critically important to the economy of our region whether it be sport fishing (catch and release of our endangered salmon species), whale watching, photography and tourism to name just a few economic connections. Both orca and salmon are culturally important - certainly to native nations but, also, to all people of the Puget Sound area. These are iconic animals that do provide a spiritual, aesthetic presence to all of us and it is our responsibility to care for them by providing the healthiest environment we can. We are stewards of this region! If we can identify specific actions that improve the health of our bodies of water we need to step up and do this! Dumping sewage within these waters is horrifying - the pathogens, endocrine disruptors and chemicals that are present in human waste potentially cause immeasurable damage, are persistent and not easily broken down! Our waters are not a toilet, items are not flushed away - they remain within the sediments, water column and food web for decades. I send an urgent "call to action" making it illegal to dump sewage within our waters. Thank you!

Jennifer Lutz (PNW citizen 58 years, Environmental Science teacher, advocate for salmon and orca)