

Krista Rome

I am very concerned about two things in regards to the rulemaking documents.

1) Water conservation and Water Use Efficiency projects should be supported by DOE as a very high and first priority in this effort. As the most cost effective and least environmentally impactful approach to our water supply issues, we all need to be doing everything we can to minimize the amount of water we need to use. Just as in any other mitigation process, the DOE ought to be **REQUIRING** that **AVOIDANCE** and **MINIMIZATION** be done to the greatest extent possible before consideration of Mitigation through off-set. That this hasn't been set out as a clear ground rule for this process is disturbing. That water conservation projects have simply been added to a list on equal footing with expensive engineering projects is both irresponsible to future generations and to the environment.

2) Agricultural irrigation and water rights should **NEVER** be considered as mitigation for new rural residential development in Whatcom County. Existing ag water rights do not currently cover the need for irrigation water, and we need to reserve every strategy possible by farmers, for farmers. Nobody likes to shut down a farmer by taking their water back. We cannot back ourselves into a corner where after allowing more water for residential homes, we find we have no strategies left to ensure water access for food production. As a farmer I am opposed to using strategies such as surface to groundwater conversions and stream augmentation for anything other than the salmon and for releasing excess water rights for other farmers who need them.

Thank you for your consideration,
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