

Herbert G. Porter

This afternoon I attended your public meeting at the Ferndale Library in Ferndale, WA. Unfortunately, nothing was advertised regarding the way it was presented. A very large number of people showed up, and the overwhelming majority was frustrated and angry at the format that was utilized by the Ecology representatives. We all expected a formal presentation with charts and visual aids, followed by a question and answer period. That did not happen. All you had was four people at four small tables answering individual questions. It was noisy, hard to hear, and I am sure, many of the questions were repetitive. Some people left the meeting out of frustration. I strongly suggested to your representatives that they change their format for tonight's meeting in Lynden. Otherwise, you may have a riot in your hands.

As far as the proposed rules that are being presented by Ecology, I want to express my strong disapproval. Though I currently live within the city limits of Ferndale, I have lived in the county, on and off, over the last forty years. From what I have read, the Legislature, on a bi-partisan vote, set a limit of 3000 gallons per day, though there is a previous law that set that limit at 5000. Now, your department has taken it upon itself to limit the indoor use to 500 gallons per day along a small insignificant amount for lawns, gardens, etc. When I asked one of your reps how they came up with that figure, the person responded by saying that it was a compromise based on the input received from other people and agencies. I then asked, who were those people? I was told that many were from Bellingham, the Lummi Nation and other agencies. If that is indeed the case, Bellingham has their own water source in Lake Whatcom, so why are they concerned about the water supply in the count? Second, I appreciate where the Lummi nation is coming from and their concern for fish enhancement, but when does a very small percentage of the population dictate what the vast majority can and cannot do when it comes to their individual water use? I strongly suggest that you folks go back to the drawing board and use some common sense and don't just limit yourselves to studies that justify your preconceived opinions. There are have been other studies that have clearly showed that ground water taken for rural consumption for individual homes in Whatcom County takes up a very insignificant amount from the overall ground water supply. I would ask you to consider a figure of 2000 gallons per day. To me, that is more realistic. It will address some of your concerns about the ground water supply and allow people in the rural areas of Whatcom County to have enough water for their needs year-round. thus enhancing their quality of life. In closing, I would like to refer to an old adage... "Whoever controls the water, controls everything else". Shades of 1984! Thank you for allowing me to share my comments and concerns.