Georgina Armstrong

I support the draft rules that implement the Shoreline Management Act as they are a significant step forward, but environmental protection must be stronger.

About 80% of estuary habitat in Washington State has been lost and much of what remains is threatened by rising ocean levels. That is definitely the case for us in Edmonds where we once had an estuary and a much more extensive marsh that has since been lost to development. Extraordinary numbers of wildlife still depend upon the Edmonds Marsh, which is threatened by sea level rise. Climate change MUST be included in critical area standards and account for sea level rise and changing hydrology, including the landward migration of wetlands and critical saltwater habitats. We are the stewards of our environmental treasures and they must be protected for future generations to enjoy and value. I also feel strongly about the inclusion of No Net Loss of Environmental Function. NNLEF must always be considered when drafting environmental policy into law. Last, but not least, there must be enforcement because without it there is no consequential action that will be taken to keep these protections in place. Mandating enforcement by 1) clearly specifying the exact circumstances under which a local government must enforce its Shoreline Master Program is vital, 2) requiring the removal of any hard shoreline stabilization or structures that are built without approval must be set forth, and 3) requiring performance and maintenance bonds for all environmental mitigation projects must be recognized as the way to ensure long-term accountability.