Robbie Bassen

I''m Robbie Bassen. Thank you. I''m a water restoration practitioner and soil health consultant. I''m currently a resident of Medical Lake and a homeowner in west central Spokane. I''m speaking tonight regarding the proposed updates to the shoreline management rules.While we all share the goal of protecting Washington''s waters, the current trajectory of our state''s regulations has become restrictive and counterproductive to actual environmental resilience. By focusing so heavily on rigid, top-down mandates, these rules tie the hands of local communities and property owners who know the land best. Our current storm water has run-off regulations, our prime example of the problem. Instead of forcing a one-size-fits-all regulatory framework that stalls local progress, our focus needs to shift towards empowering decentralized, practical runoff management. We should be incentivizing proactive filtration methods, like infiltration basins, rain gardens, and permeable materials that naturally filter pollutants before they ever reach major centralized water bodies. Furthermore, we are seeing clear evidence that overly restrictive regulations are failing to protect the very environments they claim to safeguard.Look no further than our own backyard and Medical Lake, with the devastating Gray Fire. Medical Lake is the largest and most critical wetland ecosystem in our immediate area. Under current regulatory logic, high-level protections should have kept it safe. Yet, with all the layers of restrictions, it burned. When regulations become so stiff that they prevent active, adaptive land management, they create tinder boxes.
Nature-based approaches must include the flexibility for local communities to safely manage their ecosystems. I urge the Department of Ecology to step back from creating more burdensome, restrictive rules. Instead, streamline the process so that local communities can implement real, active, and flexible water filtration and land management practices. This is my plea, as well as my offering, to help shift our focus towards lenient, nature-based solutions in watershed restoration. A new water paradigm, to create small, decentralized water-retention features, heal erosion scars, and recharge our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and aquifer. Please contact me for more information on these solutions. Thank you for your time.