



September 26, 2023

Marla Koberstein
WA Department of Ecology
PO Box 47696
Olympia, WA 98504-7696
marla.koberstein@ecy.wa.gov

RE: WAC 173-201A Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the State of Washington

Dear Ms. Koberstein,

Our organization has represented farms of all sizes in Skagit County for nearly 80 years. We represent both crop and livestock interests, and we disagree with the Department of Ecology's (Department) recommendation to list the upper watershed of the Cascade River and its tributaries designated as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW). We are asking you to postpone any decisions on this matter until full transparency and sufficient water quality data to support the designations and the benefits of this proposal are met.

We are concerned that this designation could limit the use of lands along this waterway. Currently, there are areas used for livestock pasture near the Cascade River and we want to ensure that their operations are not impeded by this designation or others in the future. This designation could lead to actions that severely limit land uses, including practices related to grazing, farming and timber harvest throughout the areas tributary to these waters.

The Right to Farm Ordinance in Skagit County is as necessary today as it was in 1991, and any negative impact on farm operations or farmland must not be ignored. Skagit County's success relies on agriculture and the many farm families who support our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Smith".

Jennifer Smith, President
Western Washington Agricultural Association
2017 Continental Place #6, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

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