Clayton Compton

Dear Ms. Marla Koberstein,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Ecology's Natural Conditions Proposed Rule under Chapter 173-201A WAC, Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the State of Washington. I am an individual person and I care deeply about maintaining protective water quality standards throughout Washington's waters.

First and foremost, we remind Ecology that under Chapter 90.48 of the Revised Code of Washington, which states in part that "it is the public policy of the state of Washington to maintain the highest possible standards to insure the purity of all waters of the state consistent with public health and public enjoyment thereof, the propagation and protection of wild life, birds, game, fish and other aquatic life, and the industrial development of the state." Under no circumstances should Ecology weaken the state water quality standards for dissolved oxygen or temperature, which are both critical to the survival and future of salmon and other aquatic life. Ecology has been managing waters of the state using the human allowances of less than 0.2 mg/L dissolved oxygen and less than 0.3°C temperature using known and reasonable technologies for decades. Any increase in the allowance would be inconsistent with Chapter 90.48 RCW.

Secondly, Ecology should not risk a jeopardy finding under the Endangered Species Act. In 2008, both the National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service found that human allowances of 0.2 mg/L of oxygen or 0.3°C for temperature when natural conditions are worse than the numerical standards would be insignificant and unlikely to harm endangered species. Any process that deviates from those values would require additional Biological Opinions. A jeopardy finding would cause significant delays in the adoption of these water quality standards. The most efficient path that maintains species protections is to maintain the current levels of less than 0.2 mg/L dissolved oxygen and less than 0.3°C when natural conditions are worse than the numeric values in the water quality standards.

Third, Ecology must factor climate change into the human allowances. Climate change will warm waters through a variety of processes, and warmer water holds less oxygen. This means there is less capacity for impacts from current human activities, which will result in more stringent regulatory requirements.

While some polluters may suggest a long process to make room for weaker standards, we cannot wait years for a decision. Ecology needs protective approaches for temperature and dissolved oxygen now. We urge you to reject any efforts that would delay implementation of stringent water quality standards across the state.

Thank you,Clayton Compton10925 NE 37th Pl Apt 1Bellevue, WA 98004