

Murray Taylor

Rulemaking Lead Sawabini,

I have a couple questions and comments beside the scripted version below. Is this a one size fits all remedy to ground water conservation? There are some areas where drawing well water doesn't effect the stream, lake and river flows. My well is 250 feet deep what science is there that suggests my water usage effects stream levels? I am on an approved septic system, I put water back in the ground do I get credit for that water I'm returning to the aquifer? We water a large garden for home use during the summer, probably equal to 1 acre in size. We also need to water new trees we've planted as part of the Lake Terrill watershed restoration. The suggested restrictions would limit garden and amount of trees we could plant. Also most of this water is also returned to the aquifer. I am a liberal voter and I'm conservation minded, but the suggested well restrictions go to far and are unnecessary to save our ground water resources. It is not the small land owners that are depleting our stream and river flows.

Now, back to the suggested text, with which I totally agree.

Please consider my comment on the proposed Nooksack River watershed permit-exempt well rule. Based on the information below, I believe that the proposed rule unfairly restricts indoor water use by rural households and that the restriction on outdoor water to an area less than that authorized by statute is not only wrong, but also does not promote the rural lifestyle that is the essence of Whatcom County.

The rule restricts indoor water use to 500 gallons per day. While this amount of water might be appropriate for households in urban areas, rural households tend to be larger in terms of residents and require more water for household use. 500 gallons per day is the accepted use of a family of four in an urban setting, but larger rural families leading a rural agricultural lifestyle.

There is also the issue of enforcement. While I certainly do not support metering of permit-exempt wells in the rural areas of the county, it does raise the question of how indoor domestic use will be monitored and, if necessary, enforced when a household exceeds the indoor use limit. Enforcement would be easier for outdoor use, but enforcement of an arbitrary and unrealistic indoor use limit seems to be ineffective.

I also disagree with the artificial restriction on outdoor uses proposed for single connection permit-exempt wells. Rev. Code Wash. § 90.44.050(2019) explicitly allows the use of a permit-exempt well to water one-half acre of noncommercial lawn or garden. Ecology now seeks to limit that use to only 1/12 of an acre through some undisclosed mathematical formula. While the restriction can be understood when more than one household is connected to a permit-exempt well, restrictions on a single connection are unnecessary and unwarranted.

Thank you for considering my comments. I anticipate seeing a rule that better balances the needs of rural households against our desire to efficiently use our water resources. Murray Taylor