

May 22, 2009

To: Jay Manning, Director, Dept. of Ecology  
Mary Selecky, Secretary, Dept. of Health  
Grant Beck, City of Yelm, Community Development Dept.

From: Marilyn Reardon  
11417 Clark Rd SE, Yelm WA 98597  
[mreardon@fairpoint.net](mailto:mreardon@fairpoint.net)

It is with deep concern that I have learned of the City of Yelm's action to use a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance in the proposed drilling of wells to provide water to the 5,000 home Thurston Highlands development in place of a full Environmental Impact Study.

The proposed *five-fold increase* aquifer pumping holds the potential for immense environmental impact on the citizens of our area who have private wells, in addition to impacting water rates of city users. Environmental Impact Studies are designed to thoroughly assess important environmental impacts and to gather public input to allow citizens not only to be aware of proposed actions, but also to have the right to oppose, if necessary, actions that put them at risk. The City's behavior in this matter is unconscionable and calls into question what none of the residents of the area want to think: that perhaps large developers are privately directing financial "incentives" to our elected leaders. Just as disturbing, and more likely, is that City of Yelm officials simply want to get more money into the tax base without intelligent consideration of the long term ramifications – a problem seen in both small and large cities. And the City of Yelm has the unfortunate national reputation of placing gag rules on citizens input...a shameful sign of both ignorance and arrogance.

As a person who has a private well, I demand that:

- The City of Yelm withdraw its MDNS and instead call for a full EIS
- The City hold a series of public meetings to openly present detailed EIS data
- To hold a series of public meetings to allow full comment from the citizens

The City of Yelm, although having accomplished some fine things in the past few years – the constructing of sidewalks and lighting for Yelm High School students to safely walk to school; the planting of many trees on our streets that add to the beauty and air quality of our town; the purchasing of a rail line for potential future use – their record in regard to water use is worse than dismal, one example of which is the illegal over-pumping of the aquifer for 7 years. There is a reason the State Dept. of Ecology studies these matters and puts limits in place. Why does the City of Yelm blatantly refuse to comply with reasoned regulations? And why does the City of Yelm continue to move quietly, in secret, on actions that effect large portions of the area population? Have they not learned that, although it is more difficult to inform and engage the public, in the long term, this always leads to better decision-making.

I will be carefully following this process and fully engaged in the open public debate on this crucial issue which must occur.