



To: Board of County Commissioners, Island County

From: Langley City Council

Date: 1 April, 2024

Topic: Memo to Accompany Ratification Vote

The City of Langley, in ratifying Island County's Resolution #85-23 to accept the Medium Population Growth projection wants to see Island County plan for and act to ameliorate the associated impacts of climate change. Climate change is already here, and it is a threat multiplier. With population growth, we all increasingly rely on our sole source aquifer system. It is essential to plan sustainably and develop a better understanding of the risks of saltwater intrusion, lessening recharge, and increasing contamination to our aquifers. Climate models reveal that we are in the early days of climate change and we are looking at a future where these effects will increase in severity. Already, extreme events are shattering records and we must plan for even greater extremes in the near future. We already see that our forests are dying from drought and increasing summer temperatures. Dying forests and longer, hotter summers increase the risk of wildfire. We already are seeing shoreline flooding and increasing bluff erosion. In view of these concerns the City of Langley would like to see the County prioritize:

A. Hiring a Sustainability Planner

- To ensure that Island County prioritizes future sustainability
- To ensure training and support for Planning, Public Health, and Public Works personnel in implementing innovative technologies based on new science that will serve Island County residents and environment by preserving and protecting Island County's natural resources.

B. Acting on the recommendations of the [Marine Resources Committee's 11/6/23 White Paper](#) and on those of the [1992 Ground Water Management Program](#).

C. Addressing the impacts of Sea Level Rise by prioritizing managed retreat rather than shoreline armoring and stopping all construction close to bluffs and the shoreline.

D. Requiring Low Impact Development for all building projects through the adoption and implementation of the [2019 Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington](#).

E. Planning for wildlife corridors to protect our wildlife and assure greenbelts throughout the County. Reforming the Public Benefit Rating System and Conservation Futures program to achieve landscape-scale conservation and protection of connectivity and critical areas in Island County.

F. Protecting Island County trees, forest cover and green infrastructure as this will protect aquifer recharge, cool the islands in the summer, help prevent flooding and protect soils. Advocate with DNR to ban clear cutting on our Islands which are Federally designated "Sole-Source Aquifer Areas". Resist changing zoning laws to allow smaller lot sizes in the Rural and Resource zones. Establish a minimum canopy cover requirement for development in the rural areas.

G. Advocating for a comprehensive waste reduction system, including food waste. Support an Island County composting facility, anaerobic bio-digester and biochar manufacturer, as well as more robust recycling.

H. Encouraging solar energy and battery storage in every possible way.

I. Encouraging the transition of all public buildings away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy.

J. Listening to the voices of our Youth - the people who will have to try to survive the biggest impacts of our current action and inaction.

K. Allocating resources to increase staffing in Public Health and hydrogeology.

L. Updating the County's critical aquifer recharge area map and associated processes for reviewing new developments, septic systems, wells, and clearing and grading in such areas.

M. Quantifying the capacity limits of our islands' air, land, and water resources and utilize these limits as determining factors for land use decisions.

N. Enforcing Island County's Clean Water Utilities Code 15.03.

The City of Langley endeavors to continue to build a strong relationship with Island County as we move forward in this time of a drastically changing climate and welcome a robust line of communication.

Thank you for your consideration.