



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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December 14, 2011

Mr. Tyler Ahlgren
PO Box 2849
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Re: Port Angeles Combined Sewer Overflows

Dear Mr. Ahlgren:

Thank you for your December 6, 2011, letter, which expressed your concern that the city of Port Angeles's (City) approach to Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) was "outdated and expensive" and that the City should pursue an alternative strategy based upon source separation.

I believe you know that the City recently prepared a cost estimate for that alternative approach. The City estimated that the capital cost of separation/sewer rehabilitation would be about \$180 million. In comparison, the estimated capital cost for the City's adopted plan for transport and treatment is roughly \$40 million.

Besides costing less, the City can implement its plan now, while the cost of construction is at an historic low. The separation strategy will take years to implement. When the economy fully recovers, public works capital costs will rise again. The City may ultimately save millions more by moving forward now.

I also want to point out that under the City's strategy, in the next few years CSOs will be reduced to an average of one per year, per outfall. Unfortunately, separation and rehabilitation would likely take many years to plan and implement. During that time, raw sewage would continue to spill into Port Angeles Harbor on a weekly basis in the winter. The sooner the City stops spilling sewage into the harbor, the better for Puget Sound.

In my letter to you of last June, I noted that we have considerable agreement on what needs to be done to improve water quality. I think that we agree that stormwater and CSOs are critical problems to solve, and that both are expensive. Reducing CSOs and polluted stormwater runoff is integral to Puget Sound restoration.




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In turn, I hope you will agree that balancing the needs of economic, community and environmental health is a big job in the best of times --- and these are not the best of times. Local governments across our state must pursue cost-effective solutions that protect our environment if they expect to garner the public support needed to solve environmental problems.

Sewer systems are just one part of the public infrastructure. Cities like Port Angeles are working hard to manage, finance and upgrade aging roads, water systems, stormwater programs, wastewater systems, solid waste facilities and public power systems. Each element of public infrastructure is important to a community's quality of life and a healthy economy.

I encourage you to continue working with the City on the important water quality issues facing Port Angeles and the broader Elwha Watershed.

Sincerely,



Ted Sturdevant
Director

cc: Senator Karen Fraser
Senator Jim Hargrove
Representative Steve Tharinger
Representative Kevin Van De Wege
Marty Loesch, Governor's Chief of Staff
Laurie Mann, EPA Region X - Water Quality Program,
Linda Mapes, Seattle Times
Kristine Reeves, Senator Patty Murray's Office
Sally Toteff, Ecology - Southwest Regional Director