

## **Posted on Public Health Website on 5/10/16**

### **Final Comments about Thurston County OSS Management Plan**

The online survey was open from 10/9/15-12/15/15 and reopened from 2/2/16 – 2/18/16. Comments were also submitted via letter, e-mail, printed survey forms, and phone calls.

### **PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### Generally supportive

Septic plan recommendations are 1-not strong enough for reasonable, and 3-just right for public health. The current system is totally unreasonable and a flat rate makes much more sense! I hope this proposal is accepted and implemented right away.

The plan is very reasonable and recommendations seem well-founded I would really like to see the inspection certification training program expanded to all OSS owners as well as greater outreach to OSS owners, including service reminders, to help ensure that septic systems are being properly maintained. Perhaps offering reduced fees to inspection-certified owners and/or owners who provide regular maintenance and service records would incentivize good O&M practices.

I think the plan is fair and increases the capacity of the Environmental Health Department to help keep septic systems operating and protect the environment as well as public health. I encourage you to pass the new plan.

notices about inspection and maintenance would be a good thing. Question: when the septic system cleaners come to inspect and/or clean, do they currently transmit a copy of their work/findings to the County?

I would like to see more enforcement of repairs and replacement of failing and failed systems. I think there should be stiff penalties and fines for systems that are failing until a system is functional.

A defective system anywhere is a problem for us all. If there is a septic on the property the owner should pay. Most any system failure/leak will dump something into the Puget Sound or Chehalis.

The plan appears to be well thought out and an improvement for maintaining water quality. I applaud the committee's work do this - I have a well & septic system.

Even though we are in a "special area" - it is important to us to monitor the septic systems in our community to prevent the costly requirement to hook up to a sewer system.

I prefer tiered because of high water tables, older tanks, high risk areas & distances from waterways, & # of people in household all influence need for inspections or repairs. I think very older tanks, high risk areas, tanks in high water tables should be on tiered system

Newer tanks & tanks in rural areas of lower water tables & further distances from waterways should remain under current rates. I do not believe everyone needs inspection that often unless there are larger families.

I have several properties. One rental has this requirement (renewable operational certificate). I like not having a 3 year permit. Paying fees on property tax is better than getting bills.

I supported the septic system management plan for the Henderson Inlet watershed when it was proposed, and I'm very happy with it. Checking a septic tank isn't fun, and it helps me to have reminders as well as knowing that I will have to pay if I am not a responsible home owner. I hope that the proposed plan is implemented.

I have lived in this location for 28 years and served on the Eld Inlet Watershed Council in the '90's. I am very happy to see the progress being made to locate problems, enforce regular servicing of septic systems, etc. Seems to me that clean drinking water and a clean Puget Sound are critical issues for all. These fees seem small and fair considering the enormity of the task.

We cannot afford to have our water sources compromised. Whatever it takes to make sure it is kept clean and pure is our only option.

Thank you for aggressively addressing this problem!

I like the idea of pumpers submitting information directly to the county. (FYI- I am writing this when I just scanned the information and really should read it thoroughly!) We had one pumper indicate that he thought our (old) system was not functioning well, but (basically) said he wouldn't report it to the county. This isn't helpful or acceptable!

As a septic system owner, I strongly believe that proper maintenance is critical to protect human health, recreational opportunities and natural resources. Our family has had a system failure and we were unaware of it for quite some time. (old distribution box completely crumbled). Without regular inspections, failing systems can go by un-noticed. If you buy a house with a septic system, you have a responsibility to maintain it. Many people don't. Therefore, it is important to have a system in place that gets this job done. The new plan does this. Protecting Puget Sound water quality is good for home values and quality of life.

I live on Summit Lake and I'm very concerned about the impact septic system failures have contributed to lessened water quality. I hope this will require mandatory dye testing. Will this plan make that happen?

It is good that a Summit Laje is to now be considered a sensitive area. There are many older septic systems that should require inspection, repair and / or updating & / or upgrading to avoid further deterioration of water / drinking water quality. New construction should be severely curtailed / limited. It seems any new homes are huge with large occupancy / water usage - and no doubt human septic waste. It appears nearly all of these large homes on smallish lakefront lots are being granted substantial variances. This is not in keeping with conservation, preservation, health and Thurston County Nast Shoreline objectives. Thank you for your concern and action on these issues!

Probably a good idea. Where does the money go – does it go into the general fund? If it stays in a septic only fund then I think it is a great idea.

Is the septic plan going to extend sewer? I'm hoping to switch to sewer, the septic is always a worry.

Have concerns

I fully support properly maintained septic systems - but need to be shown where the existing program is not working to protect our marine districts.

This is all focusing on water quality related to septic systems. I'm guessing this is related in some way the the Scatter Creek Aquifer Management Project. In almost every water quality study I have read from Thurston County, water quality has improved dramatically in areas where dairy farms were closed or managed more closely. Even though more septic systems and homes were built in my neighborhood, water quality improved over 100% because the dairy farm is no longer there. Here is the link to one of the studies:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehsc/documents/AppendixOgrandmoundwatersystemplan2012.pdf> The management of agriculture waste seems to allow a significant volume of agrowaste. I feel like the homeowner is being targeted and taxed when other sources sewage are potentially being ignored. I think it is good to monitor and manage water quality, but don't blame it all on septic systems. I'm willing to contribute and pay a tax, but don't ignore the other issues that are actually causing more problems than our home septic systems.

I spent thousands of dollars on a new, upgraded system. I know my responsibilities in maintaining this system to protect water quality. However, I also know others living in my area have old systems that have never been inspected so who knows what impacts to water quality are occurring. I have one neighbor using an outhouse. Inspection of old systems needs to be addressed as well as the use of an outhouse.

I enclose the survey as requested but after reading the associated article carefully, I have don't have the information necessary to answer your questions.

We used to do a check on our systems ourselves, fill out a form, and pay a permit fee every three years. Now we still pay a 3-yr permit fee plus we have to pay a contractor to check the system – a juicy benefit to septic system installers, and increase in cost to property owners.

But I understand that many owners may not have done the check correctly – or at all – and may not have had their tank pumped when they should, so I think that getting a qualified person to do the check was justified. This seems like a pretty good way to catch poorly operating systems and get systems repaired.

This change in monitoring found an underground alteration make to our system by the previous owner that was not disclosed when we bought the property and would never have been discovered by the previous tank inspection. Had there been a proper transfer inspection in 2004, it probably would have been discovered at that time. I am sure that the repair done, due to the contractor inspection, likely made the effluent clearer and will probably extend drainfield life. So I think the contractor inspection was a good monitoring improvement even though I didn't like having to pay more for it.

The permit fees currently collected should cover the cost for the people needed to send out bills, collect money, send out permits and monitor enforcement on those few problem properties. You say that your goal is to "create (a) funding strategy that is stable, self-sustaining and adequate to fund a viable septic operation and maintenance program."

I would have to have the following information to make an informed response to the survey:

1. I see that the fee as recommended would be \$20 higher than the current permit fee. Why would replacing the permit fee, transfer fee, pump report with a flat annual fee be a better funding choice for septic system owners or the county?
2. Would this replace or be in addition to the septic contractor's fee?
3. What is the cost of the program and how many properties bear the cost?
4. Why would it be better to tack the fee on property tax rather than getting owners to pay for a 3yr operations permit?
5. Owners should have to prove that their septic system when sold meets county requirements and is as designed – that they haven't made changes that make it less functional. Why should all taxpayers have to pay more to cover transfer fees when it seems more reasonable for sellers to cover that cost at time of sale?

I checked the county Environmental Health webpage and could not find the answers to these questions. Until I know the answers to these questions, I will have to choose the "current system."

Homeowners with modern, "better" systems pay huge fees for monitoring & operation, where older systems on the water pay little but present the highest risk to water quality. Why is homeowner expense based on system complexity and NOT risk?

We live in a two adult household, my neighbor is a single adult household with no children. Both households are quite careful about use and maintenance of our septic system. Based on our recent 3 year survey, we should each be good for at least one (3 years) or two (6 years) more cycles before pumping would be needed based on sludge/silt accumulation. With a \$66/year fee, doing it under existing plan would cost less than half of the county fee based system. The certificate inspections just started, what causes a jump to a new system that is significantly more expensive for homeowners?

It seems that there are problem areas immediately adjacent to a water body. Maybe those systems should be subject to extra scrutiny and new design standards.

We have done everything we have been asked to do. We took the class to inspect our system. We get it pumped when we need to. If repairs are needed, we get it done. We live in the Henderson Watershed and don't feel it is fair to charge us more just because we live here rather than somewhere else in the county.

It seems that the County has identified failing domestic septic systems as the primary source of pollution in Puget Sound. IF that is the case, it seems that it would be more efficient to expand or more fully utilize the tools already in place to identify failing systems, which I suspect are a very small proportion of the whole. Septic tank inspections are already required and reports are filed. It may be true that more revenue is necessary to staff up to adequately review the reports. Education efforts are a total waste of time, staff, and money and will only educate the educated. Those causing the problem will remain in the dark because their eyes are closed. I seriously doubt that it is necessary to assess an annual "permit" which is a focused tax that generates millions of dollars and allows the County to create a massive bureaucracy to accomplish something that actually requires much less.

As an owner in the Nisqually MRA it is totally unfair that owners in the MRAs bear the burden for the septic program. The tax should be shared by everyone. The change in funding of the program should NOT be an opportunity to increase the overall charges to homeowners. It seems the \$45 is still to high.

I would recommend focusing on identifying and working with homeowners with failing systems vs. just blanketing everyone else with the burden. Put your existing data in a system that you can use to analyze the information you have. You should be able to identify all systems that haven't been pumped in a given period of time. Focus on reaching out to those specific people as they are probably the ones with potential problems.

Target the most egregious offenders first before you start blanket sanctions on currently efficient systems.

Those who's failing septic systems are near or on shorelines of course should maintain and repair them. Dairies that have sewage ponds that are not maintained or engage in illegal animal disposal along rivers (The Chehalis in particular) need to be monitored and fined if applicable. The amount of chemicals being dumped on the soil on truck farms in Rochester is concerning. I am one person on a regularly maintained septic system. Go down the road and fine those living in campers dumping raw sewage on the ground. Start there.

We should add sewer lines if the county is interested in reducing the waste.

There are obvious water quality management issues uncovered during the recent grant supported expenses along the Jenni St well, but the cost to remediate should not come without a more well defined plan to improve the whole water quality system. It is unacceptable to participate in additional screening when current county water projects cannot guarantee safe drinking water for residents due to consistently high coliform counts. There needs to be more explanation of the outcomes and accountability of proposed testing.

*(comment re: renewable operational certificate):* Yes, for what reason I don't know

Don't agree with charging people who are doing the right thing, especially to compensate for those who are not. That subsidizes poor behavior and does not foster individual responsibility. Drags everyone down for doing the right thing. I want a system that holds irresponsible people accountable. I resent funding others poor choices and behaviors. I don't have any idea how to do this, but we must take into account human behavior and reward good behavior not bad behavior.

#### Generally opposed

The county should focus current resources on policing out of date pumping/inspections and set up \$ penalty when out of date. I do not support more funding for this department. Despite your chart showing cost-comparisons before & after new fees, reality for many of us is: We don't plan to sell, so our current cost is really \$45 over 10 years vs. \$440 under new plan. A 10x increase is not something we want to see.

The on site septic systems isn't the main culprit for our puget sound runoff problems. It's the municipal systems that overflow raw sewage into our waterways when we have rain storms and too much runoff that can't be properly treated. Another new fee charged and then mismanaged by the county is not the answer. I am so tired of the government systems interfering with our private business.

I own multiple homes in the Nisqually management areas. I have completed the WSU septic real estate course and the County taught self inspection course. In my humble opinion, and it is shared by many

septic professionals in the County, the system for non waterfront Whitewater systems is broken. The County mandated requirements are ludicrous. I understand if the systems are within 200-300 feet of the water that they would need more stringent inspections, but anything farther than that should have the same requirements as a sand filter or mound system. The current system is set up solely to create wealth for the septic inspectors. If you create a solid plan that is fair and equitable for all systems more people will follow it.

I am opposed to adding one more intrusive layer of government. There is no disaster happening with septic systems in Thurston County. Septic systems already are monitored with pumpers report, which I already have to pay for, so why do you feel the need to add more hardship to property owners? Property owners get no benefit from this! The biggest problem in Thurston Co. is engineered septic systems, systems you require. Gravity feed systems rarely fail. Tiered charges? You want everyone to subsidize other peoples' overly engineered systems? And you call that fair? There is no health issue. There is no disaster. The water is cleaner than it's been in decades. So, can you explain exactly why you need this nearly \$2million annually?

This is bogus socialistic control. You are continually trying to get paid for looking for problems. You tried this in the 90's.

Stop trying to fix what is not broken by legislating behavior based on pseudo-science!

As a new homeowner in Rochester I find this completely ridiculous. It is already difficult enough with a pocket gophers and other requirements that the county commissioners are starting to try and enact so we need permits to do anything on our property.... even remove a tree that is dangerous to our home. Then there's Orca trying to impress a large fee just to be able to burn yard waste on your property. The septic permit that we had to obtain ( which shouldn't have applied to us anyways because we are not near the coast or any water) just to purchase our home should be sufficient enough to keep an eye on how septic systems are in this county. If anything the county should be charging this fee to residents who decide to not renew their septic permit every four years. If your current on your permit and following the rules and doing everything the county require so far why should there be an additional inspection performed?

I know you don't care and will do whatever you want without a lawsuit stopping you, but this is just another do-nothing plan on the part of the county to get revenue. The septic pumping people already inspect the tank when they come out. When I see a county employee drop into my tank and take a look when it is pumped, I would consider supporting such a fee. But that will never happen.

I would appreciate if the county explained why such an effort is needed. It hasn't been demonstrated to the public what the problems and risks associated with septic systems are. What are the statistics on these problems? I would like to see a list of actual cases where septic systems have contaminated ground water in the past 10 years along with specific reasons. Also, please stop charging us fees in addition to the exorbitant property taxes we already pay. These fees and taxes are making it increasingly difficult for people to live in rural areas. The economy is down, unemployment is high, and people are having trouble food on the table for their families. We cannot afford any additional fees. Please find another source of funding.

I need to have my septic inspected as often as a house the same as mine.  
The only different is, there are only two living in my house and four or more in the other house.

We both need to have tanks inspected every four years.

My tank is good for 6 to 7 years, while their tank is good 4 to 5 years. But I have to have inspected every 4 years.

Good money out of my pocket.

Houses should be inspected basic on population in the house not bedroom or how you do it. Now it is 4 years, Inspect and pay.

Happy to give input: there are other problem areas that need to be look into

I don't think that systems that aren't proven to be broken and are in areas that aren't having "failing system" problems, should have to pay for government management that isn't needed. I believe that this is a method for government to collect more \$\$ under the guise of being concerned about the environment - all those "meaningful sounding but not reflective of reality and very general in nature" words provided as justification. If I have a problem, make me fix it. If I don't, leave me alone.

Stop trying to control every aspect of people and MY land. Thurston County is crazy and I work for a county agency! JUST STOP. Between the Gopher and all the other stupid crap you do it is enough. Go smell your patchouli and leave us alone!

the property taxes I pay are already outrageous. you want to charge for waste put in a sewer system. I live where I live to get away from the government controlling/charging every aspect of my living. This is just another way to get money from the people since the government has not and cannot budget the money they already collect. Figure out another way and leave my property alone.

The only fair plan would allow grandfathering of existing systems. Thank you.

If you're so worried about water quality why are smaller than 5 acre variances being approved? If you're concerned with water conditions you would not willingly just let people put in septic every .75 acres for you can get more revenue you would keep it at the five-acre minimum and everything would be fine like it is right now. You wanted to test my well a while back and I did not approve you to because I think you need to mind your own business everything is fine out here in the scatter Creek area. And I hope you find it in your heart to leave it that way I'm already considering leaving Thurston County because of the high taxes I know something like this will certainly drive me out.

No change needed

How can this be justified when less than 1% of septic systems fail, out of 53,000. Only 150-200 repair permits are issued.

The county has allowed all the developments (housing) go in, now it's affecting ground water. How is that our problem? I didn't want to lose all the farm lands to houses the county allowed it, not my problem

Your saying you see improvement in water quality in shellfish area why not keep doing whats going on now instead of finding another way to more money out of us. We are already having trouble selling our place's because people hear how bad Thurston County is about controlling and charging residence people are starting to look outside of county to buy I have heard several times I don't want to buy in Thurston County They will screw me over

I feel this really is not necessary and do not see the need for this program at all. Maybe if you have high risk areas that you need to keep an eye on then come up with a plan for that but in 35 years of owning 4 different properties, we have never had an issue with a septic system.

The proposed Thurston County Septic plan seems to be a joke... at first I thought I had misread it, and then realized it was real. After listening and reading it is even more worrisome. You are asking home owners that you provide no services to in any form to pay for what? Services you don't provide? Taxing us for what? So you can spend more... Those who need protection due to over saturation of growth and location to water sheds etc should pay in due course, but others this is a very large over reach from an already tenuous County on a collision course with those who live here. Please get real... inspect when sold, transferred and otherwise leave folks alone. You add little value when you try and TAX that which is not needed and there are other ways to find revenue. I will oppose this move and vote all of you out when given the chance... and my memory is long.

I feel that the county is trying to place the cost of designed systems in high maintenance septic systems sites that the builder/ owner knew what the cost when building it would be. They should be the ones to bear the high cost and not the rest of the home owners in Thurston county. Please stop trying to charge others for people how make the choice of this site and septic system that must be used on it.

County government continues to grow and become even more intrusive. Work within your existing budget and work to improve efficiencies and downsize your overall operation, with the exception of fully funding and supporting the Sheriff's Office which you are loath to do!

This appears to be a great Thurston county government over reach into our backyards... not necessary and not required.

I'M still confused normally we have septic tank pump every few years now why do you want a mandatory . I't seems like all you want is another few million dollars from us to come up with some other stupid laws another question is our ground water getting bad if you have a updated system I' maybe understand if system is totally outdated. THANK YOU

So tired of having to pay just to live. I'm aware of options that I can implement to fully control and take care of sewage waste without septic or sewer that is safer and cleaner than either, but of course it's illegal because you can't charge people for it. Keep out of our wallets! You already take too much.

I see no benefit to hiring more people to shuffle around more paperwork. This seems a lot like another government money grab.

Seriously pump and inspect every 3 yrs??? Maybe for identified high risk areas/systems prone to failure.

Perhaps mandating a required septic inspection say every three to four years would be a better idea and safer for our environment. The plan fee accomplishes nothing for protecting our lands and water supplies.

I feel this re inventing the wheel idea is not needed, fees for new, replaced, or major repaired systems and having us pay for pumping and rectification every 3yrs is fair enough to cover this idea. the new fees would put more of a burden on those of us on a fixed income, I.E. retired and disabled. but i do agree



about different fees, living within 50-75yds near a water shed or fresh water lakes should have different fees, for all of the above examples.

I'm all for clean water but fail to see how this would help. It seems more like a way to collect a whole lot of money and create/expand another county department. Not every septic owner is equal. I am one person living on 6 acres. Every time I have had my tank pumped (between 6-10 years) and inspected I have been told it is a well working system and there is no reason for more frequent pumping. I do not favor this plan.

There should be no annual fee for septic "education." People who do not follow the recommended septic maintenance guidance from the county should be fined instead. I am opposed to any fee by the county and I do not understand why the county feels it needs to double its budget in this area.

When septic systems are maintained and operating properly there should not be any issue with leakage into the ground water--contamination in any shape, manner, or form. Fluids from the drain field either evaporate into the air, or similarly leave the system through evapotranspiration via the vegetation growing above the system. Thus whether or not one lives in the Chehalis drainage basin or the Puget Sound drainage basin should not be a factor. Assist those that need to bring septic systems up to "standards" and don't regulate/charge others when there is no need.

The proposed plan is clear overreach of government. I paid for and maintain my septic system. If you wanted to charge me for it, you should have paid for it to begin with. I do not in any way, shape, or form support this proposal! You are making it impossible for people to own or afford to own a home anymore.

This is the most ridiculous thing I've seen in a long time. The fees, the pumping schedule, self certification. The amount of money to be made from this fee is over the top. I don't need any more junk mail from the county. The stuff that comes to my house now goes straight to the recycling. It's a waste of resources and lazy way out.

Did you know that our district has to rely on volunteer firefighters and EMTs for evenings/weekends and holidays? When the county rams fees like this down our throats w/out putting it to a vote, you are putting our schools and public safety at risk. Remember that when your child or loved one is turning blue in the middle of the night and you call 911. The current septic program for Henderson Inlet puts a fee on thousands of households to locate tens of failing systems. This should have been a program with a sunset clause, not a new giant government entity with a blank check to grow.

Thurston County one more time wanting to micro manage everything that a private land/home owner can do with their ownership. From high tax base, to high cost septic requirements, to unreasonable water setback shore line distance, to the so called pocket gopher crisis. This county and the state Gov. in general seems to have a higher priority on the earth and varmints than the average citizens ability to financially survive and live. People should come first.

I think having to dig up the septic tank to check it every 3 years is too often. (No, we cannot use risers as it would be very unsightly right by our front door!!!) Before the plan was implemented we were here for about 15 years. When we checked it the first time, it was not even close to needing pumping, and that was with 3 people here. Now, there are 2, so it makes no sense. If we do everything ourselves and submit information electronically, we should not have to pay you a fee. You created this monitoring

burden and I don't think it is right to pass your costs along to the end user, especially so frequently. \$45 is way too much. The frequency for that fee was not clear. I think your plan needs to establish some criteria that would excuse people like us from a 3 year cycle and push that out, for example, to every 5 years. There are others like us: less than 3 washer loads of clothing a week, barely use the garbage disposal, run the dishwasher 1-2 times weekly, are away from home at least 4 weeks a year, don't flush tampons or other non-tissue items, don't take baths or showers every single day, rarely have company. And, we used to be gone all day 5 days a week. (We are retired now.) Complex septic systems maybe should have a higher fee if they are complicated and need someone from the HD to examine it.

Why change what works? No where is it stated that the current program needs additional funding. Do not fix it if it is not broke just on certain persons vested interests or desires. This seems to be just more penalties for living in the country instead of in town and being subject to sewer and water charges.

The plan is not focused on the problem, it focuses on raising money in an effort to fix a problem the county created. The problem areas are just that. Problem areas that are known, the housing prices are low because of it, and the fix is one tank at a time as they fail. Not charge the entire county to fix a few, educate the bone heads that won't pay attention, and pay for additional county employees working at a never ending problem (bone heads). The county wants to make policy, rules, laws to fix isolated problems and have the entire county residents pay for the counties overreaching stupidity. Just because one system works in one area, the county wants to push for this system in all areas, even when it won't work in all areas. Current county employee's are making decisions by emotion and not fact or having a full understanding of how these systems work. Yes, even the current septic permit issuers. The best fix is to do nothing. the property owners will replace as needed or sell to someone who will. Either way, it gets repaired.

#### Personal Responsibility

The cost of septic inspection and pumping is great enough that responsible septic owners shouldn't be charged a yearly fee. When I've had my system pumped it was recommended that I have it done every 4 - 5 years. A schedule of recommended inspection and pumping should be made for the different types of septic systems available. As long as owners show their compliance with the schedule for their type of system, and have proof they have performed any maintenance to keep their system working properly there should be NO fee paid to the county. Otherwise, you are punishing responsible owners. Those who have septic systems that are not maintained are the owners who should be fined and forced into compliance. I shouldn't have to pay a fee simply for the fact I have a septic system because a city or county sewer system isn't available where I live.

I am retired. I have a septic system that is working fine and has been since way before I owned the property. Are you thinking you need to get involved with systems like mine. I don't. If you start charging fees and making unnecessary inspections and charging fees for professionals to come in where will the money come from? Get a hold of reality and consider everyone in your so called findings. I agree that sensitive areas need to be monitored and if problems are found they need to be addressed. This does not include the entire county. Cool your jets and work on the real problems first. When a system fails it should be brought up to current standards for existing systems. Your current and proposed methods are NOT working for us, you scare us. Help us to keep our systems going with advise, direction and if necessary hold the shovel for us. Our country is setup for WE THE PEOPLE. I have been involved in construction in Thurston and nearby Counties for decades and I long for the early days when the authorities helped with projects rather than hindered with permits and bullshit fees. Get a grip.

This is a ridiculous consideration. If it fails, I am responsible for the clean up as it is on my property. Why would there be a fee for an inspection that will never happen.

I really don't like the idea of a septic police coming on my property. I maintain / pump my system as required. My system was permitted, I pay my taxes, and I believe any new fees should be charged to new systems. This county is getting to be a joke, homeowners and taxpayers are so restricted it feels like we don't own our own property.

Systems that have been in use for decades will get necessary repairs & maintenance by home owners as necessary. With all the information necessary online and Environmental Health to help us, let us do it ourselves.

This is burdensome and unnecessary. We already have oversight, inspections, and the fees are already high. I have 10 acres of forested land with rain gardens, etc. and I continually see my rates go up for storm water, etc. My septic is in good order. I've already installed risers and inspect it regularly. Please don't make changes for the sake of making changes. Unnecessary. Thanks

Our septic system ( standard gravity) installed 35 years ago is functioning properly and has given us no problems. I do not believe collective punishment of all septic owners is a solution to the problem. Believe me when a septic system fails the owners nose will find it out and take care of the problem, the County says 84 to 95 % of systems in the program are in compliance. I would like to see the hard ( not theoretical ) scientific proof this is the problem.

I paid for my septic system and all the high priced permits to install it. The permits assured that the system is in good working order per code. I see no need for Thurston County to extort yet more money from us!

This just penalizes all of us who keep our system up.

Just getting the word out why it is important that septic systems a get proper maintenance (which mine does) is enough and fine those that don't.

I pay to have my system inspected every couple years to renew my operational certificate. Furthermore I paid more for the installation of a clean septic system (Glendon). I don't need another fee from environmental health!!

We pay to have our system up to date and to have it pumped. Is the city going to start paying for that, otherwise how is it fair for you to charge us for our system? It isn't. Just another way for you to get money from homeowners, it is a shame and disgraceful.

We pay to install and maintain our systems, no county intervention is necessary.

I think it is ridiculous that the county thinks they need to control my property. I'm an upstanding tax paying citizen who maintains my house and property (including my septic system) why now does the county want to impose new fees and regulations? Just so they can get more money out of us... go after the people that are the problem. Quit making the middle class pay for the losers that don't pay taxes and don't maintain their things. I'm fed up with it.

Don't make me pay for other people's choices of where to live - areas of poor drainage, if you have more gravity systems there would be less maintenance

Don't force responsible homeowners to pay unnecessary fees. Paying 45.00 per year will not improve my septic system one bit. I utilize the county's informational material to properly maintain my system in good working order. I do not need to pay a county babysitter to micromanage my system. I also have a septic system in Lewis county and they don't find it necessary to charge fees in order to comply with State law. Thurston County seems to have an attitude that the only way to solve problems is to charge fees. By the way, a previous assessor back in the late 80's(I believe her first name was Ann) decided to add the value of a septic system to our property assessments so therefore I'm already paying taxes for my septic system. I'm also against paying fees to subsidize those homeowners who choose to live in expensive homes on or near marine waters or sensitive areas. You did not give any information about the backgrounds and residential locations of those individuals on the so-called citizen's advisory committee. This is necessary in order to determine if their recommendations were biased in any way. There is no reason why you can't use the current fee system to comply with state law, just as other counties are doing. Leave the middle class alone!!!

Everybody should be good stewards of our environment; however, this county has gone way overboard. I pay for the septic pumping, the septic inspection, and then I have to pay the county \$110 for a piece of paper that says I'm good to go for another 3 years. My request to Thurston County is to stop charging ridiculously high fees for virtually nothing, stop taking away my ability to use my private property in usual and customary ways, stop imposing rules and regulations without asking the people and vetting out the bad ideas (i.e. plastic bag ban, onerous and overreaching critical areas ordinance). Remember, the government is supposed to serve the people, not the other way around. Hopefully, the 2016 elections will clean up some of this politically biased and ideologically extreme mess.

I do not feel that people who are keeping their systems running correctly should have to subsidize people who are NOT doing things correctly and/or have a failing system. Each property owner should be responsible for his/her own repairs and maintenance. I do not mind contributing toward a system to monitor beachfront properties and enforce compliance so that raw sewage is not seeping into our common waterways.

I have been responsible to caring for my septic system for 20 years and all is well. Further government intervention is unnecessary.

#### **Communication, and Process of Drafting Plan or Public Input**

Joke of a survey, like you care

Shouldn't letters be sent to all home owners with septic systems, instead of putting it in the back of a newsletter. Great way to sneak in a new fee.

Great presentations. Thanks for the handouts!

Please make sure to put the info ppt. presentation online so the public can access it.

Not much to say, except this was a very professional meeting. Well done.

Prefer No fees but remedial work is necessary in sensitive areas and no action in how density septic locations. Tiered system would be fairest with consideration of those on low income that cannot afford to pay for remedial work. Homeowner Inspection with operational & Maintenance reporting would help as county has limited resources & funding. Certification classes (check)

This hearing was just P.R. It was poorly advertised. I never received the newsletter "Talking Trash." Only found out about this hearing by accident. They blamed pollution & alge blooms solely on septic systems. They did not mention fertilizer & farm run off, animal waste from horses, cattle, & industrial pollution. They refused to allow the public to speak.

Your not letting everyone no most everyone has heard about this throu word of mouth if you did better at letting it be known you wouldn't have a building big enough to hold the people

Attended the Septic Rate meeting. The meetings were not well advertised. He contacted his installer who was not aware of these meetings. The problem is not as bad as it is being stated, and not bad enough to charge everybody. He stated that only written comments were allowed at the meeting and that questions were not answered, and was told to send questions in writing. Also, a levy needs to go to the people for a vote.

Why was a notice of this not mailed to all of the houses impacted by it? And by mailed I mean in a real county envelope, not something that looks like junk mail. There should have been an open meeting at the courthouse too.

This needs to be better distributed and communicated to all those that will be affected. What oversight and accountability will be in place to assure the fees accumulated and spent are achieving the aims set out and communicated to the stakeholders? What controls are in place to assure this is not another revenue stream for government with no public buy-in and skirting around current tax implementation rules. What other services could be better served with this revenue stream - full-time fire departments, enhanced police/sheriff patrols, better enforcement of land use regulations. etc.?

I question why I learned about these proposed changes on the back page of "Talkin' Trash & More" and not in a first class letter to me. I am a septic system owner who will be directly impacted by these changes so I think our leadership should make a good effort to inform me about this. I do not consider the back page of a news letter that is frequently considered junk mail a good effort. Maybe it is because this proposal is as unreasonable as some of the things I have heard about the existing septic system regulations and other things our government does to us.

This article is a masterpiece of gobbledegook and confusion. Nowhere does it state WHAT the proposed fee structure is in comparison to what it is now (is there one?) Is it to create a new source of revenue for what? Is the proposed plan to do what? Inspect individual septic systems? Reduce pumping fees? Repair failing systems? What is the current fee system? When you explain it better then I can answer better.

Honestly, I'm not impressed with the questions of this survey and I've yet to see any estimates of how much will be collected with each of these proposals or exactly how the money is going to be spent (i.e. how many staff will be hired, an estimate of how many homes can be reached each year.)

I would like to see the data on the Henderson area homes. e.g., how many lots w/ OSS, how many are yet to get into compliance, what dept of Health has done to obtain compliance, why are we not yet 100% in compliance

## **CHARGES**

### Risk-based system

If a system is within 100 feet of a water source then the fee and monitoring should be increased accordingly.

People in south thurston should not have to pay for the sewage issues in the Marine Recovery Area. If it's equal then at least every resident should be paying a share.

Pay based on risk

I do NOT want to pay to maintain everyone else's system!! Not a fair fee!!

After paying \$16,000 for an updated and safe system, I would not favor paying an annual fee. I do favor fees for those operating older systems, especially those who have wells (or are adjacent to wells) or live in a sensitive area.

### Equal charge (flat rate)

Right now I pay a lot of \$ every 3 yrs to have my system checked by a paid company & have to pay over \$100 fee to the county to renew my permit. Thousands of other septic systems are not required to do this – including my neighbors. All septic owners should pay something to support water quality.

Everyone in the county should pay the same fee.

The current system is unfair and unreasonable and I am in complete agreement with the committee's recommendation to repeal the requirement for operational permits, pump reports, etc. While I don't particularly like it, I understand the need to collect some sort of user fee to pay for services related to septic systems. Our operational permit will renew the beginning of January 2016 and I doubt the new plan will be in place by that time. I hope you will consider a user phase-in that would give us credit for \$125 we will pay for the three-year permit and not charge us additional fees related to the new plan until 2019.

The fee system and the process that is currently in place is the most confusing. The inspection process, what is supposed to happen during the inspection process, whom you are supposed to pay and what amount you are supposed to pay is extremely confusing and changes every time. The inspectors have required me to pay the fee to them but the money is not allocated to my bill at the Olympia Septic Office. The Olympia Septic System Office has been unresponsive to these issues. I current changes to the plan has been ineffective. We need to allow the home owner to inspect and pay for their own septic system, and not have a septic company to receive the payment and do the inspection. I am paying over \$ 400 for every inspection.. Why ?

By lot.

It should be county-wide, everyone should pay the same thing. It should be equitable.

#### Fee-based (current system)

Total bureaucratic nonsense to place more fees on citizens. I am completely against your plan to start charging "fees" for private septic systems. How much more "MONEY" can you extract from people without being considered thieves or dictators? In my opinion, this is only a ploy to begin the process of "forcing" home owners to pipe into the public sewer system, which overcharges and/or to keep raising your "fees" until nobody can afford to live in this county.

No new monthly or annual fees should be applied, only current time of transfer fees and inspections should be used. Individuals pay \$7-12,000 (equivalent to at least \$20-\$40 per month for 30 years) to install septic systems according to county standards and so they do not have to pay monthly sewage fee's. Its unfair to charge additional taxes when fee's have already been collected. Any fee's needed for county wide projects should be collected from every one and not just people with septic systems. Helping the environment is good but not if it comes from discriminatory tax practices....

Leave system the way it is currently. If I have a problem with my system, I take care of it. I shouldn't have to pay for others that have septic problems.

Good as is

This is government overreach. The current fees for O&M and time of transfer is enough. The homeowner already does not get anything of value in return for these fees.

The current system works just fine. As homeowners I think we pay enough already.

Current home purchases already require an inspection of the system. Terrible idea to add a yearly fee.

The current fees for O&M and time of transfer is enough. The homeowner already does not get anything in return for these fees.

should be user only

current fee. no annual fee. permitting fees charged

county government, please get off this case. the current free policy works just fine. the flat rate that you are imposed right now is ridiculous and will not change the current operations of private septic systems. you just want more money. that's all.

Proposed fee system costs too much. Where is the justification for raising that much money? I am already being charged for the value of my septic system through property taxes, each year. The current training and individual inspection that we have now works fine, in my opinion. What are we gaining except "data"?

I don't need the county to provide "equitable" services to me, and I don't want to pay an annual fee for services I either don't want or don't need. My septic system is properly maintained. The current funding system based on usage fees should be maintained. What is FAIR and EQUITABLE is for those who are using county services to pay for what they use, not do distribute costs among everyone.

The current system where I pay to dump, pay to install, and pay additional property taxes for having a septic on my land.

Only fees on sale and transfer, not ongoing

Any system to require monitoring. Thanks!

including fees on new, replaced and major repaired septic systems.

A flat rate fee can be fair but should be tied to the "inflation rate" to maintain county stability of program.

#### Alternative suggestions

What about fees for dairy farms and other agriculture waste.

Charge per # residents in house & INCOME LEVEL

You should only have to pay a fee if you don't comply with having your system inspected. It's unfair for septic owner to pay the county fee and to have to pay to have their system inspected. You should be fined for negligence not for having a septic system.

Either fee is too much if you also do not offer low cost financing to ALL property owners to make the necessary upgrades. Collecting the fees solves your problem at the county level but does nothing for the property owner. It is half of the solution. Again as a governmental agency you only look after your own self-interest. "We got outs, so stick to the public."

I'm hoping that if the recommendations are implemented, the county will eliminate the fees charged when an operational permit is not renewed on time. I'm a real estate professional & would say that every single bank owned property I've sold that is on septic has an expired operating permit (if people are losing their home they seldom can afford to renew). But then the buyer is penalized by having to pay fees to reinstate the operational permit, even though they were not the party who let it lapse (& frequently have already had to pay for pumping & repairs). If the renewal fees are continued, I'd like to see a waiver for cases like I've described.

exemption for new systems installed within the past eight years

I understand that all government agencies need money; however, wouldn't it make more sense to have mandatory septic pumping and inspection at least every three years? Why charge homeowners a fee and not make sure their septic systems are healthy?



We don't live in Thurston County; we live in Mason County. We have our septic pumped every three years and there are only two of us in the household. The septic company recommends we have our system pumped every 4-5 years, but I would rather be safe than sorry and we live on a lake so I think it is the responsible thing to do. It costs us \$353. Couldn't you tie the pumping to something just like our auto insurance is tied to our ability to drive? You could charge property owners \$360 on their property tax and remove it when they provide proof of pumping and inspection.

As water quality improves in the watersheds with poorer quality, their prices should come down.

charge the out of compliance owner more.

Income & Property driven

I strongly disagree with an annual fee to all septic system owner who are in compliance, to be used to generate money for the county. Use existing money to target high risk areas near sensitive areas and bodies of water. Use the existing data base to get septic owners who have not cleaned their systems in over 5 years, and have not filed the associated fee, and go after them.

Private property/No gov't role

After caring for the cost and maintenance of my system for over 40 years, it is abhorrent now, to learn that the county wants to charge a fee under the guise of public health and safety. We all know it is just one more thing the county wants control over so they can bleed homeowners of more of their money. This is not for the benefit of the public and we know that the money will be wasted on unnecessary projects as is too often the case.

We see no value in this tax on our property. We maintain - don't penalize us for being responsible!!!

We have to put septic's in to Thurston and state standards. We have to pay taxes on installation cost of product and to maintain. Every time we turn around there is a new fee to be placed on the back of the land owner. Should we talk about gopher fees? Extortion by the county at the highest level. Now septic too?

I pay for my system to be pumped and inspected it is mine unless you are going to dig up my system and re-landscape my yard I should not have to pay you for anything

I think it's just a lame excuse to suck more cash out of us

Why now...we have took care of our system all its life do not need your help if fee's (tax) in goes up from here!!!

The description in the notice speaks of being fair to low income citizens. This needs to be fair to all, including those of us who put time, money and energy into septic designs, inspections and functionality and who have fully functioning systems. Fees are not an option

**We oppose the fee** the county is trying to enforce for septic system owners in Thurston County. We do not see the need for this and do not understand what you are going to do-- for us-- with this money.

Are you going to inspect our septic systems each year and make sure they are operating correctly? We paid the county a fee to have our ground and perk holes inspected as part of a requirement prior to building on our property.

We paid for a septic permit and also a large amount of money to an engineer to design a septic system for us. Then we paid the county for another inspection fee when all was completed.

If---our septic system is not working properly then the county or the engineer that designed this system should be responsible for a system that is not correct.

What good is this \$45 fee going to do? We say no to this fee.

For those responsible homeowners who for years have been responsible for their systems, no fee at all should be charged

I don't like to pay over and over for my private septic system when I do not use city/county sewer lines. I am paying for your staff to push paper. Your plan has allowed the tank pumpers to increase rates substantially because they can and we have to use them, thus we are hit twice by this policy.

I don't feel that you have any right whatsoever to charge any kind of fee for my septic system.

Fees are not necessary septic systems are the responsibility of the individual home owners

why should we pay you, the county government, the fees. Will you pay for our maintenance and vacuum fees? this is another unfair taxation.

What am I paying for? I pay for the pumping, the inspection, and then the county. The county fee is out of line in my opinion and should significantly lowered.

#### Government fiscal responsibility

Where my system is located I have to check it every three years. I pay my septic pumper who in turn pays his taxes. By charging me a fee every year would be double dipping.

With 53000 on site septic systems in the county at \$45 a year = \$ 2250000 - \$2500000 a year, how will this money be used ???

This is just another way the county government is bleeding us dry. And on top of that you guys can't even manage the money you already have.

This proposal seems to be another way for local government to tax people who are already over taxed. It also is clear to me that government should learn to manage the monies that it has and when it can't live with in those means it should make cuts to the fat just like regular citizens. We are fed up with the government inability to manage the peoples tax monies. We do not have bottomless pockets.

If this new charge fee is enforced I will demand an account of every dollar collected and where it's going. I will not allow the county to use septic systems as a tool to fund any other programs. There must be a detailed report of what the funds are intended to be used for and why those actions are needed.

Who's pocket will the monies collected go to.

I am tired of the county trying to levy more taxes from me in the form of fees. You can call them what you want, we are not stupid. If we saw the money being spent in a wise manner it would not be a problem, but we don't.

The 45.00 charge will continue to grow each year. As the government grows it will need more money and this is just an easy way to collect more without having to ask the people.

70 k septic at \$44/yr is over \$3M dollars... For what? Spam mail education that no one reads and discards? If I was used to ACTUALLY assist or subsidize people in repairing unknown polluting septic, so be it, but it doesn't sound like it will be. All it will do is cause a financial burden for the people that are facing a \$20k repair bill when their septic is no longer functioning.

You're looking for other ways to make more money. Too bad. Use the money you have more efficiently. Every person has to live within their budget, so do you!

where will the monies collected be used????

The county has created the "charge" to justify and fund yet another government position

If the fee stayed at \$45 it would be no big deal. Government tends to go up to \$200, \$400, etc. There is a lack of trust in government both nationally and here in Thurston County. Government is the enemy, it is not on our side. You people are not doing what you should be doing. My well is 100 feet away from my septic, just back off.

County getting out of control charging us for everything. I'm getting tired of it. I pay a lot in taxes, fees, it costs around \$400 to get the septic pumped. Now you want us to pay you guys to run some kind of inefficient program that will cost us even more every year.

I could almost go for this, but... Do you know what the cigarette tax was originally for? A gift to returning veterans – now look at it. I'm concerned this fee will continue to go up and become a cash cow for the county.

#### Other

My husband and I already pay \$150 every 3 years (or ~\$50 a year) just to have our certificate renewed plus we pay ~\$150 every 3 years to have our 7 yr. old septic system inspected. We are not near water and have no close neighbors. There only 2 of us living in our house. It would not be fair for us to pay more we believe.

This is too unreasonable and over regulation. We just built a new house and moved in to the county this year and had to pay all the fees for everything and all the tests. Now you want to add additional annual fees on top of that is not realistic and to burdensome on residents with no tangible benefit to anyone. This is an obvious tact to raise money for something else that will have no benefit to those that are paying the taxes.

Additional fees for septic systems should not be assessed. We are already paying exorbitant amounts for property taxes. With a fixed retirement income, additional fees will create increased stress on an already tight budget. My septic system is very well cared for and maintained. There is no reason to subject it to more frequent pumpings than it now receives.

County mandated compliance, County pays all fees. We pay over \$4000 a year in property taxes on a small house on 5 acres on a fixed income.

Due to a catastrophic septic failure we spent over \$30,000 to replace it. During that time we spent a considerable amount of money in fees to the county. Why should I pay more money per year to inspect a newer system? Perhaps a credit equal to 8 years should be offered to homeowners who have already paid the county for the inspection process. To me, that would be fair and considerate.

I am appalled at the current fees I end up having to pay per year for my operational certificate which requires an inspection contract with a licensed company as opposed to the normal self-education and self-certification that most septic system owners can do. I pay over \$1000 per year for this. It feels like money just being incinerated (or flushed if you will) for nothing in return.

I have to cooperate w/ two neighbors to pump/inspect two different components at two different intervals. Once a year for part of the system, once every 3 years for the other. And big \$\$\$, hopeless coordination.

Is frustrating we had a TOT fee jump so much from year to year and it was pretty much a waste of time and money.

The problem is not septic tanks, it is house building permits granted in areas known for soil problems. No additional fees added

Would like to know what this new fee will be used for.

I just paid \$600 to get my septic cleaned. I pay \$4,414 for taxes on a \$25,000 home. I built it in 1977 for \$25,000, it is now assessed at \$440,000. I can't pay anymore. I live a Black Lake and have my own septic and well. If I take care of it will I get a discount on the fee? There are 12 acres and some cows. Is it okay to have a privy in the back pasture?

#### Senior Citizens/Low Income

I have a VERY LIMITED pension at \$1700/month for over 30 years (@private company) & am disabled. Every new charge cuts into my VERY FINITE funds. I haven't had T.V. since 1992; no computer & grow my food.

For those of us that are senior citizens who are on fixed incomes, it would be helpful for the county to send out an inspector to check our septic systems every three years for compliancy.

I pay to keep my septic in good working order and I do not want to pay for others who do not service or keep theirs in good working order.

No one over 75 should have to pay anything - inspection-pumping. We are on fix income, have reverse mortgage - reduce tax (our physical health is poor). Our income is only \$2100 a month. It is a \$500 cost to have this every 3 years too much

Too expensive, too many bureaucrats employed to run the program. I'm retired and can't afford programs like this.

\$45.00 per year add to property taxes, but if homeowners are low income/elderly fees should be reduced from \$45.00

Too expensive

Fees need lowered.

To much

The cost for a certified septic inspection is already too much, and the cost of the operational certificate adds more of a financial burden to the homeowner.

What am I paying for? I pay for the pumping, the inspection, and then the county. The county fee is out of line in my opinion and should significantly lowered.

#### No charges or fees

The system is inspected when pumped. The fees are ridiculous.. To much big government is bad.

No more fees. I already support the program with existing property taxes. I maintain my system by following the rules for the operational permit.

It doesn't seem fair to have a fee attached to owning a septic system--it seems like another way to tax the residents when they already have expenses associated with pumping and maintenance.

Unfair, unreasonable, already too many fees paid to the county to live here.

I think this is just another way to generate revenue for the state, at the peoples expense. We keep our septic tank clean. Everyone we know in our area takes good care of their septic system, too. Generating money, at the expense of taxpayers, doesn't mean you are offering a viable solution to any "potential problem." The "Land of the Free" has become the "Land of the Overtaxed." Enough is enough.

I resent any additional charges or inspections . I take care of my septic and everyone else I know who has one does the same. STOP TAXING AND REGULATING the citizens of what used to be the home of the free. Lets tax all bicycles over 5 speed to use our roads and sidewalks

I do not favor imposing a new annual assessment.

Seems like a money grab to me.

As if we don't pay enough taxes ..and yes it is just a tax increase. .sick of it

Stop ripping off the homeowners! We pay enough for the county government's eco extortion! Furthermore... we know that this is not based in science ... its based in extortion!

I do not support new fees for my current septic system.

I already pay to maintain and keep my septic system in safe and working order. Another regulatory fee is ludicrous! I'll move out of Thurston County if it is enacted and will spread the word that the county is over-regulated.

Not wanting any of this. Just another TAX

FAR TOO HIGH TAXATION/FEE AND NO REPRESENTATION. WITH NO IMPROVEMENTS 2.4 MILLION PISSED AWAY

She received a flyer on the Steamboat Island neighborhood watch. This is just another tax. Her septic is not anywhere near the water and will not have an impact. She is not in support.

Opposed to Septic tank tax

We don't care if you are eliminating occasional fees to a few individuals -- we see this as amounting to a new tax for almost everyone, for more bureaucracy!!

No Charge for septic

There should be no charge because your whole plan is ridiculous!

I don't think I should have to pay for the SSM Plan. We already pay too much in taxes and fees. An additional fee would be burdensome for many families.

We do not need more oversight, fees, or burden. The water quality has greatly improved (oyster farms in Henderson Inlet, etc.)

The renewable operating certificate should be free to residents of Thurston County. Mine is \$150

Stop making us pay rent on our septic! The only charge should be included in the purchase price..nothing else!

You're not going to do anything other than collect money so just stay out of it you've already approved my septic system and I don't need your interference it functions fine

I am opposed to any new or added fees. I already have to get my system pumped every 3 years, which is ridiculous.

flat rate will not improve your imposed plan. do not charge us more for none that you will be doing.

We've already paid for our system engineering, permit, installation. Why should we have to pay again, year after year?

Maintaining my septic is charge enough. Stop gouging rural homeowners. We chose to live where we do to avoid as many taxes as possible, so leave us alone please.

This landowner is vehemently opposed to you accessing my wallet involuntarily for any reason. Convince me that my system is not working properly and I will fix it (at my expense). Take my money to prevent a problem I am not causing? Like hell you will.

We pay for the permit... I do not want to pay more. It is why I moved out of the city limits. My house is gated for a reason.

The charge structure should be dropped as it does not serve the people.

Included in property taxes

We pay designers, installers and permit fees enough already

Sounds like just another way to get money out of us taxpayers.

This is similar to the county inspection fee when you sell your home, about \$250 and no inspected anything just more money to the county for nothing.

Once the system is paid for, I disagree that additional fees should be charged.

Not aware as to whether or not a "fee" system is needed, and what any charges are for

We already pay pumper to inspect That Im already paying for

Now please answer me this. How does taxing me for my septic help me? I'm not in favor of this. If I wanted to be taxed to take a poop I simply would live in the city. Please stop trying to vote in more taxes. How about we figure out how to spend all of the money all ready coming in more wisely. Thank you.

Sick & tired of all the fees. Quit making home ownership too expensive!

None (13)

- None. It is my property and not a public system.
- None, the County is looking for a way to pay staff to control your life.
- None of the above. We shouldn't be charged on top of having regular pumping and maintenance. We take care of our septic tank.
- None- unless county cleans out our septic (the people who come up with this)
- None unless a new system is installed or old system replaced
- None. I bought this place, pay Taxes on My land every year, shouldn't have to pay another fee. I am required to have it drained and checked, I'm already responsible for the upkeep, an additional fee isn't required.
- None. I don't see from the info that it will be used properly

- None for this program
- None! We payed to put it in. Pay to maintain it! This is just another way for Thurston county to earn more of our money!
- None. It's my system and I pay to maintain it myself. The country can't tax me for maintaining my own property.
- None. This is just another ploy to separate me from my hard earned money for your jobs program.
- None. It's ridiculous.
- None- this is annual property tax increase disguised as a permit. It SHOULD be put to the voters.
- None. I should not be charged to use my own property.
- None other than when property is transferred.
- none pay for use of service that are asked for not to monitor for problems that don't exist or ask me to fund the protect the sound when I don't contribute to the problem
- None, go fuck yourselves!

#### No Fees (10)

- No annual fee
- No fees would be even better
- No charge! (2)
- No new fees, find the money in existing revenue.
- No fee. No new taxes!!
- no fee unless a problem is found
- No fee system or at the very least grandfathering of existing systems
- No fee at all. More money grabbing by the county with no benefit.
- NO fee...don't micro manage my property
- No fee, levy fines instead
- No fee. Spam junk mail education will not help anyone except the postal service.
- No fee. Enough is enough. There are too many taxes and fees as it is!
- No Fee. The home owner is responsible and pays enough in taxes already, more county oversight is unnecessary!
- 

#### **OTHER**

I left them in the previous question box.

I live in a home with a septic system, do not own the home.

(name), President of the Summit Lake Comm Assoc. pls contact regarding a presentation @ our monthly meeting. (e-mail)

What is exactly is

...increase program efficiencies...?

...refine criteria used to identify areas...

...tier option...



When will Thurston County stop giving rural property owners the shaft?

County stopped sending me renewable certificate years ago - Am I suppose to be paying anyway?

Eat a dick.

To Whom It May Concern:

December 9, 2015

I have reviewed the County's OSS Plan Fact Sheet in light of my 25 years experience as a septic system designer, O&M professional, and Septic Installer as well as regulatory official having worked in 3 Environmental agencies including State Dept. of Health.

- **Paragraph 1** The alleged 13-million gallon figure for rural septic systems is not supported by established facts. In Thurston County there are about 2.4 persons per home. <http://www.trpc.org/447/Average-Household-Size> State Dept. of Health regulations assume that one person uses about 60 gallons of water per day (GPD) <http://www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/Documents/Pubs/337-103.pdf> So the best estimate of rural sewage output  $2.4 \times 53,000 \times 60 = 9\text{-Million}$  gallons per day which puts the County estimate of 13-Million at 44% greater than the reasonable estimate.

**Check out the FACTS!** <http://www.lottcleanwater.org/plant.htm>

- The Budd Inlet LOTT Wastewater plant averages 11.5-Million GPD (gallons per day) but in the wet season it is 15-Million GPD which is 28% to 67% more than rural residential use. The county has it backwards! The WW plant serving Lacey, Olympia & Tumwater puts out way more than rural homeowners.
- Now include storm events like we are having this Nov./Dec. 2015 where LOTT may belch out as much as 33.8-million GPD which is a 276% increase over rural use. Rural septic system owners are much more environmentally friendly in terms of wastewater output.

**Paragraph 2** is vague. "Problems, especially failing septic systems" seems to indicate the County thinks there are problems with well functioning septic systems. Someone needs to ask specifically what those additional problems are.

**Paragraph 3 (Goals of the Plan)** It says in the last point "Plan elements should meet the requirement of state law... and. It is the "and" that is troubling. This is a veiled reference that they intend to go beyond the legal requirements and practice over-reach.

- "and be reasonable" is mentioned dead last. Overall the plan is a HUGE overreach and comes with HUGE UNNECESSARY EXPENSE.
- The plan will hit hard on rural Thurston poor, renters, and those on fixed income.
- "and be reasonable" is vague and will be decided by bureaucrats who are looking for funding.

**Paragraph 4 (bullet point 1)** Increase program efficiencies mentions specifically requiring electronic report filing which bring the County \$15 per pump report and other revenues. Over the 10-year period mentioned later on that is  $\$15 \times 53,000 \times 4 = \$3.2\text{-Million}$  (an extra \$318,000 per year revenue) in addition to whatever they tag on to the property taxes. Because the \$15 fee is collected indirectly through service providers and the Internet data service, it would be easy to continue to hide the hidden fee from homeowners.

**Paragraph 4 continued of page 2 under "create a funding strategy"** clearly the legality of the mechanism should be challenged.

- A fair stable funding strategy would be to fund the department out of the general fund since all Thurston County residents benefit from the results. The plan is a controversial proposal.
- Legally does your septic system become taxable personal property like a trailer, or be taxed as additional real property? Where in the law is there justification for collecting new

- operational fees thru property taxes?
- What would prevent Thurston County next from taxing wells, driveways, barns, gardens, and lawns? There is no end in sight!

**Under "There are two proposals for how to structure the charges"**

The flat fee of \$45 per year X 53,000 = \$2.4-Million

- What are the current annual expenditures of the Department? Is it more or less than the \$2.4-Million?
- There is no breakdown for the tiered fee schedule. How many homeowners are in each category? Will the tiered system generate more or less \$ than the flat fee scheme?
- Who will have the authority to change the annual fee?

**The Flow Chart Showing Homeowner Costs**

- **This chart appears to assume pumping every 2.5 years with a property sale with required pumping at the end of 10 year period. The 2.5 year pump schedule is entirely bogus and not support by best available science.**
- The 2.5 year pump frequency is bad for the function of most septic systems as it does not allow the proper biology to reestablish. Reference: ***Septic Tank Septage Pumping Intervals, TR Bounds that recommends a 12-year pumping frequency for the average family.***  
<http://www.microseptic.com/images/Greywater/Other%20studies/TR%20Bounds%20Septic%20Tanks.pdf>
- **A more equitable inspection frequency for the average septic tank would be once every 6 years, which will catch the heavy users, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> six-year inspection will catch the light users; that is if we base inspection frequency on best available science.**

**Conclusion:** The County plan (1) in its current form is based on inaccurate calculations and the 2.5 year pump-out frequency is unjustified in light of best available science (2). The added expenses do not make sense for homeowners and are not necessary to meet the needs of Thurston County citizens (3) or the environment and may actually damage the environment (2) from to frequent pumping.

Respectfully,

Ken Morse  
O/S Designer & O&M Professional  
[www.NetSeptic.com](http://www.NetSeptic.com) 360-923-1080

**Attachments:**

- (1) The Thurston County Plan
- (2) TR Bounds, 1994. (Abstract) Septic Tank Septage Pumping Frequency by TR Bounds 1994 ASAE Conference.
- (3) Morse, Ken 1998. The Importance of On-Site Wastewater Regulations. Sept. 1998 J. Environmental Health p.25.

## Thurston County Onsite Sewage System Management Plan 2014 Advisory Committee Recommendations for Plan Update

### The Challenge

Nearly 53,000 septic systems in Thurston County treat almost 13,000,000 gallons of sewage per day. That's more than the sewage treatment plant that serves Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater.

While septic system maintenance and operation is the responsibility of the owner; problems, especially failing septic systems, impact people and resources beyond the owner and their property boundary. The county health department has a responsibility to be sure there is a system to find and repair failing septic systems and ensure that all septic systems are routinely inspected, function properly, and are repaired as needed. Currently less than a third (about 28%) of the septic systems require a renewable operational certificate – one method used to ensure systems are functioning properly. Only about one-fourth (22%) of the other septic systems in the county have current documented inspections.

### Goals of the Plan

- Protect public health & water resources by making sure that sewage is treated and disposed of adequately.
- Inventory septic systems, identify and ensure repair of failing septic systems
- Focus on the ongoing maintenance and operation of septic systems.
- Plan elements should meet the requirements of state law: WAC246-272A, RCW 70.118A and meet the needs of Thurston County citizens, make sense, and be reasonable.



### Highlights from the Proposed Plan

- Increase program efficiencies so staff can **focus on correcting failing or deficient septic systems**. For example, requiring that reports are submitted electronically frees the time staff spent on data entry and allows them to focus on correcting problems. Electronic records such as record drawings/as-builts; pump reports & inspection reports are more efficiently available to public on-line, 24 hours a day.
- When **selling a home**, the **septic system must be pumped and inspected**. The recommendation is that in addition, **deficiencies in the septic system must be corrected** before the time of transfer report is complete.
- Make septic system **education reliably available county-wide**. Send routine inspection and maintenance reminders to all system owners. Update the website, and regularly offer septic maintenance workshops.
- Refine criteria used to **identify Sensitive Areas and Marine Recovery Areas which require more intensive septic system monitoring and maintenance** in order to protect public health. Current examples are the Henderson & Nisqually Marine Recovery Areas. Recommendations are to designate Eld Inlet as a Marine Recovery Area and Summit Lake as a Sensitive Area, and further evaluate Totten Inlet and the Budd/Deschutes watershed.
- Continue to develop and implement a **robust system to evaluate** the septic operation & maintenance program to be sure it is meeting public health goals.

- **Create a funding strategy** that is stable, self-sustaining, and adequate to fund a viable septic operation and maintenance program. It should be equitable and have ways to help low-income owners.
  - The advisory committee recommends a single charge that **replaces existing fees** including those for operational permits, pump reports, time of transfer application, and shellfish protection district septic system charges. The proposed charge will be collected via the property tax statement.
  - The proposed charge will be reduced 50% for those in the senior/disabled tax exemption program.
  - There are **two proposals for how to structure the charges**.
    - A **flat charge** of \$45 per year to all septic system owners.
    - A **tiered** structure based on the location of the septic system,

documented water quality problems, and the type of work required by the health department in those areas.

- \$22/year for septic systems in the Chehalis watershed (southern Thurston County outside of Puget Sound basin).
- \$44/year for septic systems in the Puget Sound basin but not in a special area (Deschutes, Totten and southern Nisqually watersheds).
- \$66/year for septic systems in a Marine Recovery Area or other special area, currently Henderson and Nisqually Shellfish Protection Districts.
- The following chart shows the costs to owners of a single-family home over a 10-year period comparing the current fee-based charges, the flat-rate, and the tiered approach.

<b>Cost Comparisons – 10 years</b> Assumes 1 Time of Transfer in 10 years, 3 Pump Reports in 10 years, and operational certificates if needed			
	<b>Current</b>	<b>Flat Rate</b>	<b>Tiered</b>
Nisqually MRA - low risk	\$875	\$450	\$660
Henderson MRA – high risk	\$1,275	\$450	\$660
Operational Certificate – Puget Sound	\$630	\$450	\$440
Operational Certificate – Chehalis	\$630	\$450	\$220
No Operational Certificate – Puget Sound	\$255	\$450	\$440
No Operational Certificate - Chehalis	\$255	\$450	\$220

To read the full version of the draft recommendations please visit [www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehomp](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehomp). A survey to provide input is also on the website and will be open until December 15, 2015. Comments or questions may also be sent to Jane Mountjoy-Venning, 360-867-2643 or [venningj@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:venningj@co.thurston.wa.us). Mailing address: 412 Lilly Road NE; Olympia, WA 98506. All comments and the survey results will be shared with the Board of Health.

**Thank you for your interest!**

*This paper was first presented by Terry R. Bounds, P.E., at the 1994 conference of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, in Atlanta, Georgia. This article may describe design criteria that was in effect at the time the article was written. FOR CURRENT DESIGN CRITERIA, call Orenco Systems, Inc. at 1-800-348-9843.*

## Septic Tank Septage Pumping Intervals

T.R. Bounds, P. E.\*

### Abstract

When a designer initiates an economic analysis of an effluent sewer—e.g. a septic tank effluent pump (STEP) collection system or a variable-grade collection system—or an on-site management district, the ability to predict tank pumping intervals is necessary for assigning a cost to that function. An arbitrarily short pumping interval may distort this operational cost by a factor of ten or twenty, causing it to appear prohibitive, or, at the very least, resulting in the expensive practice of transporting septage composed primarily of water. Pumping tanks more often than necessary not only wastes money and resources, but increases pressure on already overburdened septage receiving facilities.

In the 1970s effluent sewer systems were relatively rare, and operation and maintenance scheduling, including septic tank pumping intervals, were projected using information from U.S. Public Health Service studies published in 1955. During the 1980s, an eight-year audit of 450 watertight septic tanks in an effluent sewer system at Glide, Oregon, demonstrated respectable correlation with those Public Health Service studies, determining that 12 year pumping intervals predicted 30 years before, for an average size family with an adequately sized tank, were not unreasonably long. In 1991 Montesano, Washington, an effluent sewer community of 1,125 watertight septic tanks, found after monitoring 19% of their system that they too experience similar septage accumulation rates.

Based on the assumption that watertight tanks are an essential ingredient in any effluent sewer or managed on-site district, methods are presented to enable designers, regulators, and operations personnel to size tanks relative to occupancy loading, to achieve adequate hydraulic retention times for settlement of solids, to determine a tank's optimum effluent withdrawal level, and to predict septage pumping intervals.

### Keywords

Septic tanks, Septage, Pumping, Interval, Frequency

### Septic Tanks

There is a good reason why, in this age of advanced technology, the septic tank is still in use. It works. More than 45% of ultimate treatment can be accomplished in the septic tank. Its anoxic digestion can reduce solids as much as 80%. In short, the energy free septic tank is the most cost efficient primary treatment available for nonindustrial sewage. Eventually, however, a septic tank's undigested solids must be removed and disposed of. When is "eventually?" Opinions vary widely. Estimations based on guesswork or on traditional practices are frequently unreliable. Making accurate predictions of septage pumping intervals, however, is not only possible, it's often essential. When a designer undertakes an economic analysis of an effluent sewer—e.g. septic tank effluent pump (STEP) or variable-grade collection system—and when the manager of an on-site district establishes a maintenance budget, the ability to predict tank pumping intervals is imperative for assigning a cost to that function. An arbitrarily shortened pumping interval may inflate this operational cost causing it to appear prohibitive,

\*T. R. Bounds, P.E., Vice President, Orenco Systems, Inc., Sutherlin, Oregon.

Ken Morse, R.S.

## The Importance of On-Site Wastewater Regulations

In the winter 1998 issue of *Pipeline*, a publication of the National Small Flows Clearinghouse, the article "Why Onsite Regulations are Important" caught my eye.\* I thought the subject pertinent also to *JEH* readers, and I couldn't resist comment. The article noted a growing public feeling that regulations are excessive or unnecessary. I absolutely agree that on-site regulations are necessary but that we are still faced with the task of convincing a skeptical public. I've worked as a regulator and as a designer/monitoring professional, and I've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly from both sides of the counter. The public perception that regulations are not useful stems from the accurate observation that the process often doesn't work well and the individual pays the resulting high price. The unfortunate conclusion that regulations are not needed is poorly drawn. Modern on-site system issues are complex and beyond many people, but there are many who are competent enough to discern that better decisions could be made. In any case, people are angered when "the system" fails.

The difficulties of effectively administering on-site regulations are too numerous to discuss here, but a few topics are worth mentioning. It has been my experience that some local health jurisdictions in Washington are undersupported in the legal arena. Lack of support can take the form of weak laws and unresponsive prosecutors. When clear-cut cases of failure (with surfacing sewage) are given to the local prosecutor and nothing happens, the environmental health specialist is left holding the bag. Some of my fellows have resorted to threatening letters or other forms of

intimidation, including illegal inspections. The results are modest at best. By and large, when local health officials are unsupported, the general public reduces them to paper tigers, which they ignore. This dynamic fuels the lack of trust between all parties. This situation does not occur in all jurisdictions, but where it does, public health suffers. I could show you, today, numerous long-term septic system failures that I attribute to this malady.

A second difficulty stems from the arduousness of the journey required for approval of new technologies. Approval really should receive top priority from administrative agencies. Although proactive jurisdictions promote proven innovations, many do not. Rejection of progressive ideas stems from general mistrust of the private sector, lack of trained reviewers, and perhaps political interference. I shall speak only to the issue of trust.

Mistrust between the public and private sectors (to which players on both sides contribute) is destructive. All of us need to maintain professional objectivity to prevent the "bad and the ugly" among us from spoiling it for the rest. As a result of the distrust, valuable technologies remain unused in many jurisdictions. We must struggle to maintain objectivity and personal credibility in all our dealings and base our decisions on fact, not fancy. If professionals in public or private service cannot maintain trust, the public will know and eventually respond by damaging our public health laws and agencies (e.g., through funding cuts).

To heal the rift, we need to put aside our own personal agendas and think about what value our service brings to the customer. For

instance, it is well established that pump-out frequency for septic tanks may be as long as 10 years. Many people on both sides of the counter still promote a three-year pump-out cycle, some because of ignorance, others for economic reasons. Another example to consider is that of the administrator who drags out the process of accepting new technology. If a homeowner learns that he or she paid \$15,000 for a septic system when a better system would have cost \$7,000, will that homeowner appreciate the services of the administrator?

These issues are difficult, but we must address them. Often we don't wish to air our dirty laundry in professional journals, and I agree we shouldn't fall into unproductive finger pointing. Nevertheless, we need to discuss examples of things that are working. We must be candid about our failures so we can learn from them, and we must explain and discuss the details of how to do it better. How many current examples can you cite in which the status quo didn't serve the public good? We must ask "Which is more worth protecting—the status quo or public health?"

When we find ourselves promoting our best professional ideals, we will discover that we often achieve our own personal goals as well.

**Corresponding Author:** Ken Morse, R.S., Accelerated Septic Designs & Monitoring, P.O. Box 1385, Olympia, WA 98507-1385.

\*The article to which Mr. Morse referred is reprinted on page 26 with permission from *Pipeline*, Winter 1998.

Page 1/2 FAX # 360-867-2601

HN: Thurston County Board of Health  
This concerns the recent On-Site Sewage  
Management Plan - Final Draft 2014

HN: Commissioner Blake

South County Residents had the "Sensitive Area Tax" forced upon them even though our water flows directly to the Pacific Ocean. Even Black Lake flows to the Pacific Ocean. It seems as though the Bureaucracy never has enough of other peoples money.

Now to add insult to injury Health Department wants to tax all septic systems in order to subsidize those on Puget Sound. Talk about socialism. I also object to any of these "fees" Taxes appear on the property tax statement. It should be a direct billing from the Health Department. If the tax is on the property tax statement then an individual cannot protest the tax by withholding it for fear of being delinquent.

I object to Recommendations # 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. These seem very burdensome on the OSS owner.



Page  
2

I have a concern that this is the July 2014 Final Draft. How is it that many of us with Septic Systems did not hear about it until recently. And then those of us who want to make comments have until today Dec. 15, 2015 to make comments. The whole thing stinks. (No pun intended.) Government speak means resources equals new tax payer money.

Jim Kalkus

Rochester, WA.

*Copy to Art Starny, Director  
Public Health + Social Services Dept.*

December 15, 2015

Commissioners:

Firstly, I want to acknowledge Mr. Wally Brown of BS News for making his videos available to the public. He does a great service in this regard.

I have a question on one aspect of this septic issue.

I **am** aware of Chapter 246-272A that as of 2006 required **all** Puget Sound counties to develop management plans for OSS, as well as the RCW 70-118A that requires counties bordering Puget Sound to designate Marine Recovery Areas where OSS contribute to water quality. ie (degradation).

I am also aware that regulations coming out of WAC are the source of PRIMARY LAW in Washington State.

After the recent OSS Management Plan shown at the Sportsman's club in Rainier, I had the opportunity to speak with several people on the Citizens Advisory to the Board of Health . I understand that **in certain areas**, OSS has a big job to do, and certification to do that is available to personnel of OSS as well as Advisory members. It is called **Home Owner Inspection Certification**.

It is a 5 and a half hour training and I don't know the cost to the county or the state to pay Mr. Tipton who does the training for OSS.

My question is, why couldn't property owners be certified in this same training? **I will want** to take this training. It fits perfectly the responsibility of management on my land. Why wouldn't ANY person want that certification in their own hands. I've heard the statement, "we can't do that because people will lie". Is that the best we can do, that a few would ruin it for the many who **will** participate? A "Highlight from the Proposed Plan, is to make education reliably available county wide, regularly offer septic maintenance workshops". Why not certify us. Give us a chance in this county to keep our own house in order: to contribute and benefit from the health of the land as "shareholders", in the trenches of the county.

We have **campaigns** to get voters registered. Did you know that there are 516 Agency Titles in the WAC. Can you imagine the number of required certifications in those? Almost every personal initiative requires a certification! Why not a campaign to get property owners certified to manage their septic responsibly with training **and** certification. It is a 5+ hour commitment and a fee that could be shared as groups, or **credits** given to **property holders who sign up. Credits would be a great incentive!** A win/win if.. on your part you can, and choose to consider another way of doing county business to see this through with us.

Thank you,  
Adrienne Arias

360-894-2454  
PO Box 2454  
Yelm, Wa. 98597

Daniel Lihach  
14717 McIntosh Lane SE  
Tenino, WA 98589

Jan 5 2016

Dear Commissioners,

I write this letter to speak out against the new proposed septic fees.

I attended the public hearing in Olympia a few weeks ago and my first complaint is how poorly advertised these hearings were. I keep up to date on public announcements but, I found out about this hearing only by a chance encounter with a neighbor.

Secondly, the hearing was just a dog and pony show. The presenters blamed all of the problems in the bays and inlets solely on septic systems. There was no mention of agricultural runoff from cattle ranches & farms, clear cutting timber, industrial pollution, overflow from the municipal sewage treatment plants in Lacey and Olympia, as well as global warming, which has recently caused the warmest waters ever recorded off the Washington coast.

My third complaint is that the public was not allowed to speak at either of the two public hearings. We were only permitted to submit written questions. This shows that the plan cannot withstand cross examination and scrutiny.

I read the entire On Site Septic Plan and all of the public comments posted on the website (It took quite some time) and about 99% of the comments were against the plan. This clearly shows that the public disapproves. I understand that two of you are leaving your posts at the end of your term, but currently, you are still the people's representatives, and you need to comply with the people's will. That is democracy.

My wife and I live between Tenino and Rainier. We moved here from San Diego. One of the main reasons we moved to this area was to be free from sewage and water fees. We take care of our On Site Septic System the same way we take care of our roof and siding. It is an asset to our property.

The County already has a functioning electronic data base of septic systems. A simple software upgrade can identify those who have not pumped their tanks in the past three years. Send out notices to those who are delinquent that they must have their systems pumped and inspected within the next 12 months or face a fine. In a year the problem will be solved. Delinquent tanks will be pumped. Deficient systems will be identified for further enforcement and the Septic Pumpers will have a banner year.

When we were house hunting, we excluded critical areas, protected areas, sensitive areas, wetland buffer zones and the like, specifically to avoid these types of issues and fees.

Thurston County Commissioners  
**RECEIVED**

**JAN 08 2016**

☒ DISTRICT 1  
☒ DISTRICT 2  
☒ DISTRICT 3  
☒ CM  
☒ CLERK  
☐ \_\_\_\_\_

*page 1 of 2*

Those who allow runoff from their farms and ranches, and those who dump industrial wastes are the bad actors and the bad neighbors. They make millions despoiling our resources and are the ones who should bear the cost.

Also, those who choose to live in congested urban areas and near Marine Recovery Areas and Sensitive Sites have a higher burden and should solely bear the cost of the damage they cause. A person who violates traffic laws and drives recklessly is a danger to others and should be stopped and penalized. Those who act responsibly should be free of fees and fines. That is fairness and justice.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Lihach', with a stylized, flowing script.

Daniel Lihach



## SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBE

Thurston County Board of Health  
Thurston County Courthouse, Building One, Room 269  
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, WA 98502-1045

March 8, 2016

Dear Thurston County Commissioners, Members of the Board of Health,

As a participant of the 2014 Thurston County Onsite Septic System Management Plan Advisory Committee, I would like to express support for the proposed changes to the County's Onsite Septic System Management Plan (OSSMP). The changes include: moving to electronic records, improvement and expansion of the septic system database, regular notification of septic system owners about required inspections and maintenance, education and outreach, designation of sensitive areas, and a countywide flat fee to provide stable funding for the County's septic system operation and maintenance program (O&M).

The Board of Health is aware that Thurston County is a growing county that has a legacy of pollution from high density septic systems and systems that are adjacent to waters that are habitat for fish and shellfish. Managing human waste will always be a challenge that gets more difficult as the population increases. But by treaty right, South Puget Sound and all freshwater tributaries must remain a safe place for Squaxin Island tribal members to harvest fish and shellfish. Beyond South Puget Sound, it is the same situation in the Chehalis and Nisqually drainages.

These proposed changes to the OSSMP represent increased diligence of the County to minimize the impact of septic waste on water, fish, and shellfish resources. In the absence of the County's diligence and effort, degradation of water quality is inevitable. We have seen this scenario played out in various watersheds of the County. Thurston County's O&M program has a good foundation, but it cannot be sustained and improved on grants. Please adopt the proposed changes of the 2014 Thurston County Onsite Septic System Management Plan Advisory Committee.

Sincerely,

*Erica Marbet*

Erica Marbet  
Water Resources Biologist