

December 19, 2018

Thurston County Planning Commission
Thurston County Courthouse, Building One
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW,
Olympia, WA 98502-1045

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the update to the Shoreline Master Program. We and thousands of other homeowners are deeply affected by the County's SMP. Living near shores and wetlands, we have a direct interest, and responsibility, to carry out the program. We request ways to support our legal, daily use of our homes and promote our environmentally-conscious use of our homes and yards. In particular, we ask your consideration of the following:

1. As currently written, the draft SMP would implement a new system of shoreline permits to cover all actions a home owner might take anywhere within 200 feet of the highwater mark. Activities large or small would require either a Substantial Development Permit or a new, "written approval" available from the County's permit office (pages 62 and 65 of the draft SMP). The wording covers "all development" which by definition in the SMP covers any activity and is alarmingly broad.
2. We also note that other building and site regulations, in addition to the shoreline regulations, will continue to apply. These building regulations already provide comprehensive oversight and raise a question of why additional scrutiny is required with a "written approval".
3. Thousands of homes are in the SMP's jurisdiction at the County's many rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and areas of salt water. We question the logistics and the effectiveness of such scrutiny of each and every one of them. What is it that home owners are doing so wrong?

We ask that this broad and cumbersome control system be rethought along these lines:

1. Acknowledge the controls already in place with building and shoreline permits. Acknowledge the new dock and bulkhead regulations of the state that will be added for further control.
2. Support home owners in being proactive every day within this framework of controls.
 - Step up the outreach with a message of what's possible to do today with everyday maintenance and repair.
 - Don't add more permits and permissions. Drop the proposed "written approval" process.
 - Specifically encourage plantings along shorelines. Actively connect home owners with resources. Do not require permits and permissions. Provide "credit" toward future mitigation for large projects under permits. Put real life into the wording of the voluntary private restoration discussed in Appendix C, page C-13.

Respectfully,

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