From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Friday, April 30, 2010 7:43:09 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Water Act Modernization - Personal submission & comments

WAM discussion team…

Congratulations on the clear and thorough discussion & technical papers.

I have a few personal comments.

I have been a water district trustee on Mayne Island (Bennett Bay WD), and have developed an active interest in our island supplies, delivery and local regulation appproaches, and especially in the ongoing WAM improvement process.

In general, I strongly support ALL the goals, principles, and the "stronger" options as related to Gulf Island groundwater systems, governance and regulation.

Specific comments on the paper:

- I strongly support better knowledge (professional ,scientific) regarding sustainable supply capacity & limits (both for existing wells & island aquifers).

o in my experience there is a very wide range of understanding related to all aspects of the supply,and a real need for a baseline understanding.

o also, there is a large range of opinion on the best ways to deal with risk & fairness in regulation.

- I strongly support having standardized measures of well supply capacity and accompanying drought triggers.

o well failure surprises should be avoided with better information & planning, and expert assistance

- From the description in the Discussion Paper, I favour the "Delegated Approach":

o in my experience, the desire of many Islanders is to avoid the local regional government if at all possible (Victoria: CRD). The impression is that costs will

jump, local input and participation will drop, and service will suffer.

o There is also a widespread desire to keep local decisions local; so changes often meet with vocal resistance, especially when not well presented or when they appear to involve costs. So any initiative to move to a local "island watershed agency" may encounter some aversion to "bureaucracy".,.

o In particular, while community decision making is valued, progress should ensured by sufficient government oversight. Some enhancement and clarification to local government's powers to achieve the "4 goals" may be needed.

Related comments & questions:

- The potential to artificially recharge Island aquifers seems evident to many people (winter runoff is highly visible). Some guidance on how to proceed with such a community solution would be helpful (what's fair sharing of costs/benefits?, who pays?, minimum technical standards? , etc)

- There are both economies and drought solutions to be had by consolidating. Linking small systems (and connecting to larger private wells), developing & sharing storage, using central maintenance and other staff, can help limit costs. Some guidance and other assistance in these areas may be useful.

- A transition consideration should be a clear plan that accounts for limited resources of local governments, particularly in the area of explaining and representing chenges to residents.

- a prime concern is cost: can the impact of the coming changes be reasonably and visibly limited or spread to minimize impacts on individual ratepayers? Some accompanying regulation or legislation to cap these expenses might significantly smooth this process.

I hope these comments are of use. I'd be glad to contribute to this process further where I can.

With Thanks,

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