

ATTACHMENT 7

Project #(s): CA2016-03 and SEPA2016-012

Title: Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments

Date: 9/12/16

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY***Northwest Regional Office • 3190 160th Avenue SE • Bellevue, Washington 98008-5452 • (425) 649-7000*

September 6, 2016

Shana Restall, Senior Planner
City of Monroe Community Development Department
806 West Main Street
Monroe, WA 98272

RE: Proposed Amendments to Monroe Municipal Code (Chapter 20.05–Critical Areas)
File No.: SEPA2016-12

Dear Ms. Restall:

Thank you for providing the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) with an opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to the City of Monroe Municipal Code Chapter 20.05 (Critical Areas). This includes amendments to specific sections of the code (Chapter 20.05.030, 20.05.050, 20.05.060, 20.05.070, and 20.05.080) that mainly pertain to wetlands. The project submittal provided to Ecology included a determination of non-significance and SEPA environmental checklist. We respectfully ask you to consider the following comments during your deliberations and that you enter these comments into the record.

Ecology previously submitted comments on the critical areas ordinance on October 27, 2015, and there have been numerous exchanges by phone and email in the last year regarding this update. In general, these amendments to City of Monroe municipal code are consistent with best available science (BAS) and current Ecology guidance, such as *Wetland Guidance for CAO Updates: Western Washington Version* (Publication No. 16-06-001). This includes updating literature citations to reflect recent publications and adding new sections that clarify current policy guidance.

However, Ecology believes there are still several sections of the critical areas ordinance that will not adequately protect wetland functions in the City. I have summarized our comments in Table 1 below, which specifies which section of the municipal code we are referring to.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss my comments, please give me a call at (425) 649-7199 or send an email to Doug.Gresham@ecy.wa.gov.

Shana Restall
September 6, 2016
Page 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Gresham". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Doug Gresham, PWS
Wetland Specialist
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program

DG:awp

Cc: Paul Anderson, Donna Buntten, Department of Ecology
Lynn Kohn, Department of Commerce

Table 1. Summary of Ecology Comments on City of Monroe Municipal Code Chapter 20.05.

Page	Code Citation	General Topic	Comment
10	20.05.030	Definition of Water Typing System	We recommend adopting the water typing system in WAC 222-16-030 (Type S, Type F, etc.) rather than the current numeric typing system. This will provide consistency between the state system and neighboring jurisdictions.
21	20.05.080.D	Minimum Buffers	The minimum buffer widths required for Category I through III wetlands are not consistent with BAS and the <i>Wetland Guidance for CAO Updates: Western Washington Version</i> . We recommend basing the buffer width on the habitat scores from the wetland rating system. Tables XX.1 and XX.3 in our guidance recommend buffer widths that is based on best available science.
22	20.05.080.F	Buffer Reduction	Allowing a 25% reduction in the wetland buffer width is not consistent with BAS and the <i>Wetland Guidance for CAO Updates: Western Washington Version</i> . This is a high risk approach to wetland protection that we do not recommend.