

September 13, 2013

Monroe City Council
806 West Main
Monroe, WA 98272

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CITY OF MONROE

Dear Monroe City Council and other interested individuals,

As a local resident and business owner, I strongly oppose the rezoning of the 43 acres of property on the east side of Monroe.

Historically this land has been agriculture land. The city of Monroe needs to be encouraged to recognize the history and future importance of maintaining agriculture lands for further generations. The protection of agriculture land needs to be viewed as a community infrastructure investment. Current world and economic indicators suggest that the local and sustainable food production will continue to grow. Responsible land use and zoning that allows for local farmers to produce products that reduce carbon footprint impact, support local employment, and produce products available for local businesses must be supported. The average farm size in Snohomish County is just 46 acres; any reduction in the agriculture acreage reduces the potential for the industry that is growing. In ten years between 2002 and 2012 the county saw an increase by 100 farms. The Snohomish county agriculture industry was worth to the county over \$126 million dollars alone in 2007. Once paved over and built up, ag-land is too expensive to "undo" to make farming available again. The Local Farm, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013, Senate Bill 679 and House Bill 1414, encourage the creation of jobs and measures that spur economic growth through food and farms. All 50 states have farm to school programs in place and the reduction of agriculture land will reduce the effectiveness of such programs.

Monroe is positioned ideally to support agriculture. Major transportation corridors, prime climate, farm land, and local family based communities all prime Monroe to continue to be on the cutting edge of the ever growing local agriculture enterprises.

Susan Boyd, in the Economic Impact Statement, noted several constraints to the land in question that directly benefit the further support to maintaining this land as open farm land. The farm land, mountains, rivers and valleys create a natural separation that occurs by cresting the hill and exiting Monroe. This is a welcome feel after navigating the chaos of the city. Noise, aesthetics, public utilities, and traffic are all non-issues if this land is to be maintained as ag-land. Additionally, the flood mitigation and filling of the location would directly impact fellow farmers in the area. To ignore the fact that during flood occurrences the water that would be displaced would impact neighbors is concerning. Our farm is located upstream from this property. Therefore, any reduction or impingement in flow and dispersment of water has a direct result on my farm and fellow individuals upstream.

Please do not neglect the open space that this location provides for wildlife. This valley is rife with wildlife. Farm land provides habitat to animals large and small and any rezoning of this property will have dire consequences for the wildlife that thrive in these areas. Proper drainage, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration are reasonable improvements to the property but this can more realistically be accomplished by maintaining this land in open space and not paving it over with small habitat sanctuaries located with in developed lots.

As a fifth generation farmer in the Monroe-Snohomish area, I recognize that changes occur. However, I encourage you as individuals to consider both the immediate and long range consequences involved in rezoning this acreage. Protecting the land base for local-sustainable agriculture usage makes good stewardship usage. Please oppose the rezone of this property east of Monroe.

Sincerely,

Anna Groeneveld
29524 Fern Bluff Road
Monroe, WA 998272

