



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600 • Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

711 for Washington Relay Service • Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341

February 6, 2009

Forest Practices Board  
P.O. Box 47012  
Olympia, WA 98504-7012

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Department of Ecology has completed a first draft of its findings for the 2009 Clean Water Act Review of the Forest Practices Program. The purpose of this review is to determine if the Forests and Fish Program can continue to be relied upon to protect water quality, and bring degraded waters back into compliance with the state's water quality standards.

Copies of the draft have been provided to the Forest Policy and CMER committees for their review. Ecology has identified a significant number of issues where a higher level of attention and a stronger commitment to progress are needed in order to justify extending the Clean Water Act Assurances past July 1, 2009. In our draft report, we propose specific remedies and dated milestones to satisfy these concerns. These remedies and milestones effectively constitute a formal work plan.

Over the next three months, we will work with CMER and the Forest Policy committee to refine the remedies and the milestone dates into a plan for moving forward. We are proceeding with the intention of developing this plan in a cooperative manner with all of the caucuses. To continue the CWA assurances, Ecology must have an agreed upon plan that charts the path towards validating or creating forest practices rules and programs that reliably maintain forested waters in compliance with the state water quality standards and the federal Clean Water Act. If such a plan cannot be agreed upon by July 1, 2009, we will return to the Board to describe what deficiencies still remain and provide the Board with a reasonable opportunity to satisfy those concerns prior to eliminating the assurances.

Getting a plan in place in the next five months will be a challenge, but we believe that this effort is well timed to make use of ongoing strategic planning and budget exercises that are occurring within the Forest Policy Committee. With committed partnership with the members of the Forests and Fish Policy Committee and support from the Board and other key stakeholders, this objective is attainable.

Sincerely,

Jay J. Manning,  
Director

cc: Forests and Fish Policy  
Forest Practice Board Liaisons

