

RESOLUTION NO. 2008-05

**A RESOLUTION DIRECTING CITY STAFF TO DEVELOP PROPOSALS FOR MONITORING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IN THE LAKE WHATCOM WATERSHED.**

**WHEREAS**, Lake Whatcom is the City of Bellingham's drinking water reservoir. The City provides drinking water from the lake to more than 80,000 people; and

**WHEREAS**, the water quality of the lake has been deteriorating for the last 20 years. In 1998, the Department of Ecology (DOE) listed Lake Whatcom as an impaired water body under section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act for low levels of dissolved oxygen. In 2004, DOE listed the lake as also impaired for total phosphorous, dieldrin, mercury, and total PCBs; and

**WHEREAS**, the increased phosphorus levels, decreased dissolved oxygen, and other deterioration in the lake's water quality directly impair the City's ability to meet internal, state, and federal drinking water standards; and

**WHEREAS**, increased development in the watershed has contributed to the high levels of phosphorus and low levels of dissolved oxygen in Lake Whatcom; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has dedicated significant resources toward preventing further deterioration in Lake Whatcom's water quality. The City has focused much of its efforts on restricting further development in the watershed; and

**WHEREAS**, over 95% of the Lake Whatcom Watershed is located in Whatcom County, outside the City's corporate boundaries; and

**WHEREAS**, Whatcom County has regulatory authority for most of the watershed, the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District and Whatcom County Water District #7 provide water and sewer services in portions of the watershed, and the State Department of Natural Resources manages substantial timber lands in the watershed; and

**WHEREAS**, many of the decisions of these and other public entities directly impact the water quality in Lake Whatcom; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past, the City has frequently learned of the decisions of these public entities that directly impact the water quality in Lake Whatcom from concerned citizens, in some cases too late for the City to become meaningfully involved in the decision making process; and


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**WHEREAS**, the City currently has not assigned specific City staff to monitor the decisions of these public entities and other individuals and groups that may impact Lake Whatcom and its watershed to ensure the City's interest in protecting its drinking water reservoir is fully considered. This monitoring includes, but is not limited to, review of relevant meeting agendas, attendance at relevant County and utility district meetings, review of development permit applications and sewer and water plan updates in the watershed, and review of on-the-ground development in the watershed to ensure compliance with relevant regulations.


**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL:**

1. City staff shall provide the Bellingham City Council with alternative proposals to enable the City to monitor the decisions of the above-named public entities and other individuals and groups that may impact Lake Whatcom and its watershed to ensure the City's interest in protecting its drinking water reservoir is fully considered. The City's overall goal is to carry out the City's "no more harm" policy in the Lake Whatcom Watershed.
2. The staff proposals should come back to the City Council no later than March 3, 2008.

**PASSED** by the Council this 11th day of February, 2008.

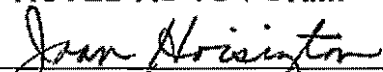
  
Council President

**APPROVED** by me this 14th day of February, 2008.

  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**   
Finance Director

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
Office of the City Attorney