



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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November 15, 2011

The Honorable Kevin Bouchey, Commissioner
Yakima County Board of Commissioners
128 North 2nd Street
Yakima, WA 98901

RE: Designation of Lower Yakima Valley as a Groundwater Management Area

Dear Commissioner Bouchey:

Over the past several years, Yakima County, state and local agencies and concerned citizens have been working to solve the groundwater nitrate issue in the Lower Yakima Valley. These efforts resulted in Yakima County requesting that a Groundwater Management Area be formed under Chapter 173-100 Washington Administrative Code in June 2011.

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has reviewed the county's request and I am pleased to announce that the request is approved. Enclosed is the Order establishing the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area, as well as a map delineating the boundary.

I am also pleased to announce that Ecology's Water Quality Program will be able to provide approximately \$300,000 in start-up funding for the GWMA. Given the tight budgetary times we currently experience, this is a testament to Ecology's commitment to finding solutions to this problem.

Our next step is the appointment of members to the Groundwater Advisory Committee. Ecology will soon be sending letters to interested parties requesting the names of individuals who are willing and able to serve on the committee. The committee needs to hold its first meeting within 60 days of appointment of its members. We will also be working to develop a contract with Yakima County for dispersing the funding.

Thank you for leading the efforts toward finding a solution to groundwater contamination in the Yakima Valley. If you have any questions, please contact Charlie McKinney, in our Water Quality Program, Central Regional Office, at (509) 457-7107, or Tom Tebb, Central Regional Office Director, at (509) 574-3989.

Sincerely,

Ted Sturdevant
Director

cc: Charlie McKinney
Tom Tebb

