



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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July 10, 2014

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force
c/o Chris Page, Project & Development Lead
William D. Ruckelshaus Center
901 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2900
Seattle, WA 98164

RE: City of Spokane's Proposed Integrated Clean Water Plan

Dear Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force:

On behalf of Governor Jay Inslee and The Washington State Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Director Maia Bellon, I would like to thank you for your letter regarding the city of Spokane's (City) Integrated Clean Water Plan. The recent adoption of the plan, which is designed to meet and exceed state water quality requirements and incorporates additional environmental and community benefits, demonstrates a concerted commitment to restoring the Spokane River.

The innovative approach to tackling combined sewer overflow reduction, the next level of treatment at the wastewater facility, and the Cochran Basin project will eliminate large quantities of stormwater pollutants to achieve a cleaner river faster.

This plan, which follows the United States Environmental Protection Agency framework, is one of the first Integrated Clean Water Plans in the nation to be developed and submitted voluntarily. The City's effort to achieve compliance through a partnership consisting of local, state, and federal agencies serves as a model for cities throughout the United States that are facing the same regulatory requirements.

Over the past several years the City has been very competitive and successfully obtained over \$100 million in low interest loans from the State Revolving Fund (SRF) and approximately \$3 million in stormwater grants to help with development and construction of the elements outlined in the plan.

The City has also been successful in obtaining Green Project Reserve (GPR) funds as a part of some of their individual projects. GPR funds are EPA pass-through money for projects that

demonstrate green infrastructure, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and environmental efficiency (WAC 173-98-130). The GPR portion of a loan is eligible for 25% principal forgiveness under the current regulations.

The new innovative Integrated Clean Water Planning process would benefit from new or different funding structures and opportunities. Our current funding structure was developed to support different needs. The Centennial Clean Water Program grant funding is set to assist small, economically-depressed communities meet basic wastewater infrastructure needs. This fund is restricted by WAC 173-95A-520 to maintain a cap of no more than \$5 million per project, and can only assist communities that meet specific population and household income criteria. WAC 173-98-300 specifically defines "specific population" as a service population area of 25,000 or less. Though Spokane may have a median household income that is 70% of the state average, it is one of the most populated cities in the state with a commensurate rate base.

We appreciate the partnership that has been fostered with Ecology. It has resulted in an innovative, collaborative, and fiscally responsible plan full of projects that are important to the health and vitality of the river. We applaud the City for making tough choices that will benefit the environment and citizens into the future.

Ecology is proud to be a partner with the City of Spokane and the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF). We are committed to continuing to work with the City and the SRRTTF to provide technical and financial assistance that achieves our common goal – a clean and healthy Spokane River.

If you have any questions, please contact Adriane Borgias at (509) 329-3515 or Adriane.borgias@ecy.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Heather R. Bartlett

Water Quality Program Manager

cc: ruckelshauscenter@wsu.edu
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