Subject: SCWCB Proposal regarding the Water Bank Feasibility Study

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

As you are well aware, the WRIA 59 Policy Advisory Group public meetings regarding the Water Bank Feasibility Study have been held with success. The information presented by consulting group supports the feasibility and viability of a successful water banking program in Stevens County. Although the study is still on-going, SCWCB would like to submit a proposal to help guide the remainder of the study and ultimately aid in a transition to a Water Bank implementation team.

The proposal is that, the SCWCB should have all management responsibility and have oversight of the Water Bank and related programs once implemented. There are several key reasons for this proposal. The following are presented:

1. The basic function and purpose of the SCWCB is to investigate and determine validity of water rights and claims for use and transfer as authorized by RCW 90.80.020. The water banking system relies on valid water claims and rights as a basis for the “banking” inventories. The SCWCB is already in a position to make those determinations and findings.

2. The Water Bank should be managed by trained and knowledgeable personnel. Each SCWCB member has been trained in water rights transfer and law by the WA State Department of Ecology (Ecology) with an initial 32 hours training and 8 hours maintenance training each year (RCW 90.80.040). The board also has an established and proven water right investigation process with forms, checklists, written policies and procedures already setup.

3. The SCWCB is the only other Government entity that can get access to and assistance from the Department of Ecology (Ecology) for water right approvals and transfers. In accordance with WAC 173-153-120, Ecology is authorized to provide the SCWCB official water right files, hydrologist support, legal and administrative review.

4. The SCWCB is an entity already authorized by Washington State (RCW 90.80.020), to represent Ecology and to conduct water right investigations and a water banking program. Its members are committed to six year terms which allows for experience and consistency (WAC 173-153-142.)

5. The SCWCB is a board of volunteers without bias or prejudice. The board has public visibility, public accountability, and is audited annually by the state. The board members are appointed by the County Commissioners after a screening and interview process, and have oversight over the SCWCB through conflict of interest rules (RCW 90.80.120) and funding.

Your consideration of the SCWCB as the management board of the future Water Bank is greatly appreciated. If you decide to accept this general proposal, it is recommended that the Water Bank Feasibility Study consulting group be so advised as to guide the remainder of the study and resulting outcome. For more information contact Kris Bellini at 509-680-1151 or Jim Gleaton at 509-935-8645.

Sincerely,

Jim Gleaton
Chairman, SCWCB

CC: Water Bank Feasibility Study Consulting Group