UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Reply to
Attn Of: OW-134

JAN - 8 2007

David C. Peeler, Manager
Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 46700
Olympia, Washington 98503-7600

Dear Mr. Peeler:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 is pleased to approve the 10 total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for impaired waters addressed in the Henderson Inlet Watershed Fecal Coliform Bacteria TMDL, which were submitted to EPA by the Department of Ecology on November 3, 2006. The TMDLs addressed in this approval include the following:

2004 303(d) Bacteria Listings in the Henderson Inlet Watershed:

Name	pollutant	2004 Identification Number
Henderson Inlet (marine waters)	Fecal coliform	39766, 39756, 39755, 39763, 39767, 39770
Dobbs Creek	Fecal coliform	40612
Sleepy Creek	Fecal coliform	40614
Woodard Creek	Fecal coliform	3772
Woodland Creek	Fecal coliform	6657

This approval includes all wasteload and load allocations assigned to sources on listed waters and their tributaries, since all of these allocations are required to attain applicable water quality criteria in the listed waters. Our review indicates that these allocations have been established at a level that, when fully implemented, will lead to the attainment of the fecal coliform criteria addressed by the TMDL for Henderson Inlet Watershed Fecal Coliform TMDL. Therefore, the State does not need to include any of these waterbodies on the next 303(d) list for fecal coliform bacteria.

For the purposes of tracking approved TMDLs pursuant to EPA's 1998 settlement agreement, which is based on the 1996 303(d) list, the Henderson Inlet Watershed Fecal Coliform TMDL contains 5 waterbody segments, all of which were listed on the 1996 303(d) list.

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The original scope of this TMDL included an evaluation of the excessive nutrient loading which contributes to water quality problems, such as low dissolved oxygen and severe algae blooms, in the marine waters of this south Puget Sound inlet. Ecology's Henderson Inlet TMDL study documented high levels of nitrate in both groundwater and the main tributaries during the critical summer period. When nitrate enters the marine waters of Henderson Inlet it contributes to increasingly severe water quality problems in the summer months. A principle source of nitrate is suspected to be the growing number of on-site septic systems in the watershed. EPA encourages Ecology to continue to work with the local municipalities to reduce the number of septic systems in this watershed which leach nitrate into shallow groundwater, the tributaries and Henderson Inlet. This TMDL also did not address temperature impairment. Since restoring the Puget Sound watershed is a high priority for both our agencies, EPA is interested in supporting Ecology's completion of TMDLs for these other pollutants as soon as resources allow.

The November 3, 2006, submittal also includes an Implementation Strategy. EPA currently has no duty to approve or disapprove implementation plans under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and therefore, EPA is taking no action to approve or disapprove the implementation of the TMDL. We appreciate the commitment and hard work shown by your staff to develop these TMDLs. By EPA's approval, the TMDLs for these waterbodies are now incorporated into the State's Water Quality Management Plan under §303(e) of the CWA. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to call me at (206) 553-7151 or David Ragsdale of my staff at (360) 407-6589.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Gearheard
Director
Office of Water and Watersheds

cc: Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology
Ron McBride, Department of Ecology