



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

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June 15, 2005

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DESCHUTES COUNTY CO

Deschutes County Board of Commissioners
1300 NW Wall Street
Bend, OR 97701

RE: Regional Rule for South Deschutes County

Dear Commissioners DeWolf, Luke, and Daly:

Congratulations to you and to your staff in the Community Development Department's Environmental Health Division (Environmental Health Division) for the excellent work accomplished during the La Pine National Demonstration Project. The information produced during this project has already been and will continue to be useful for other states and jurisdictions nationally, as well as for Oregon and, specifically, Deschutes County.

Having followed the work of Deschutes County which began with the Regional Problem Solving Project (RPS), I am aware of the extensive commitment you have already made to solve the issues of the south county area. As the La Pine National Demonstration Project comes to closure focus will now turn, in part, to implementing the loan portion of the project. The loan program will provide money to some homeowners in the area to retrofit or upgrade existing onsite systems and for new innovative onsite systems.

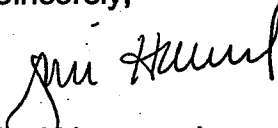
Over the past several months, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Environmental Health Division have discussed the need to develop a regional rule that would require more stringent performance standards for septic systems in south Deschutes County. The more stringent performance standards would address increasing nitrate-nitrogen levels in the groundwater. Our agency supports the use of a local ordinance as the legal mechanism to impose the new performance standards. Development of this ordinance will require close coordination between the county and our Department and, we believe, will require an updated contract between the county and our agency.

Finally, public awareness of a new ordinance is vitally important. We realize that much work has been done by the County to inform the public about the seriousness of the nitrate problem and the need to upgrade sewage treatment and disposal practices.

Nevertheless, we believe that, by nature, the general public is usually apathetic to these types of initiatives and will not realize the impact of the ordinance until it is imposed upon them. As part of developing the ordinance, we would like to work with you to develop an effective public awareness program.

I would like to confirm to you DEQ's commitment to continue working with Deschutes County towards a collaborative and constructive solution for the region. Again thank you for your attention and if you have any further questions please contact Dick Nichols at (541) 388-6146, x251 or Mark Cullington at (503) 229-6442.

Sincerely,



Joni Hammond
Administrator
Eastern Region

JH: WQ/MC

Cc: ✓ Tom Andersen, Deschutes County Community Development Department
Dan Haldeman, Deschutes County Community Development Department
Lauri Aunan, DEQ HQ Portland
Mark Cullington, DEQ HQ Portland
Dick Nichols, DEQ ER Bend
Bob Baggett, DEQ ER Bend