

RESOLUTION NO. 2011 - 01

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON TO DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY TO ISSUE AN EMERGENCY RULE CLOSING THE LAKE WHATCOM RESERVOIR WATERSHED TO NEW GROUNDWATER WITHDRAWALS

WHEREAS, water quality problems in the Lake Whatcom Reservoir are impairing the City of Bellingham's ability to supply drinking water to the nearly 100,000 people who depend upon it; and

WHEREAS, water quality degradation has resulted in inclusion of the Lake Whatcom Reservoir on the state's list of impaired water bodies (which the state is required to keep under section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act) requiring local governments to meet requirements identified through the state's water quality improvement process and specifically outlined in the Total Maximum Daily Load report; and

WHEREAS, the City also must meet a number of drinking water quality standards established by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and related state laws to protect human health; and

WHEREAS, as degradation increases, it becomes more and more difficult and costly for the City to meet these standards; and

WHEREAS, there are many ways the Lake Whatcom Reservoir is vulnerable to additional degradation, the most obvious of which is development in the watershed; and

WHEREAS, new groundwater withdrawals are enabling development in the watershed, causing additional degradation that impairs the City's ability to exercise its water rights to withdraw water from Lake Whatcom for purposes of municipal supply; and

WHEREAS, on Jan. 10, 2011 the City petitioned the Department of Ecology to take immediate action to close the Lake Whatcom Watershed to new groundwater withdrawals, thus protecting the City's senior water rights and its ability to provide clean drinking water to its customers; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that this matter be handled in an expedited emergency manner to prevent a rush for building permits and attendant well applications once landowners learn of the petition, so that the City's water rights and the water quality of Lake Whatcom will not be further impaired.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM THAT


The City Council requests that Christine Gregoire, Governor of the State of Washington, direct the Washington State Department of Ecology to immediately issue an emergency rule closing the Lake Whatcom Reservoir watershed to new groundwater withdrawals.

PASSED by the Council this 10th day of January, 2011.



Council President

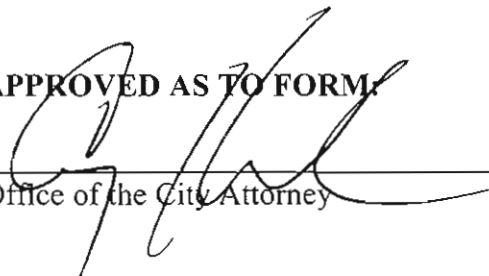
APPROVED by me this 18th day of January, 2011.



Mayor

ATTEST: 

Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM: 

Office of the City Attorney