

**To Members of the City Council and Planning Commission:**

My home is located along Crystal Springs within the 200 foot shoreline area which encompasses our island. Therefore, I am, in effect, a Bainbridge Shoreline Homeowner. I am also a member of Bainbridge Alliance for Puget Sound, a group of concerned Bainbridge citizens who, through education and advocacy, are working to protect and restore the health of Puget Sound. We believe that our task will be eased if we are able to broaden our community's understanding of the choices that lie before us.

Although the need for a comprehensive planning and regulatory program for shorelines was formally recognized as early as 1969, it was not until 1972, 39 years ago, that the initial deadline for all cities and counties to adopt shoreline master programs was set for 1974. Many local governments have revised and updated their master programs over the years to make them even more protective than state guidelines have required. It has now been 15 years since Our Shoreline Management Master Program was adopted.

It is safe to say that political expediency has always played a part in how the shoreline master program has been constructed both at the state and local levels. It has taken nearly 40 years for the state guidelines to actually include language that sets a performance standard, namely, no net loss. This has happened because a reasonable assessment of the cumulative scientific data regarding shoreline habitats as well as anecdotal data collected over many years has shown that the ailing health of the marine environment of Puget Sound is directly influenced by human activities along its shorelines.

Although local jurisdictions may include net ecosystem improvement elements in their plans, the concept of no net loss contains no attributes designed to actually improve the debilitated Sound. The state guidelines merely instruct us to maintain the Sound at its current level of ill health. Yet, to do even this our updated plan must contain changes that will require a few, more stringent, regulations in areas that have been scientifically shown to be more vulnerable.

In many cases scientific studies and experiments can be carried out in pristine laboratories with highly controlled variables. The opposite is true when dealing with the complexities of the marine environment. We are dealing with a very large experiment to determine which of our concerted efforts will lead to the result we all want: a healthy, productive marine environment. We cannot walk away from this dilemma. We can make sure a solid monitoring program is implemented so that when it comes time for our next update we will have acquired more of the kind of data we need to generate an even more refined plan to improve the quality of our marine habitat. This effort will, in the process, add value to the human domain on this very special Island that we all treasure for its abundance and beauty.

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