



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600 • Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

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December 4, 2019

The Honorable Annette Cleveland
State Senate
PO x 40449
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Monica Stonier
House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Ann Rivers
State Senate
PO Box 40418
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Paul Harris
House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Sharon Wylie
House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Larry Hoff
House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Vancouver Lake Water Quality

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Thank you for your interest in water quality, and your November 19, 2019 letter to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) regarding Vancouver Lake. Ecology's mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance Washington's land, air, and water for current and future generations. The past, present, and future conditions of Vancouver Lake and its tributaries are important to our agency.

Ecology had participated in the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership since 2004 through regular attendance at their meetings and engaging on priority management objectives and implementation actions. We understand how important it is to reduce pollution sources to improve water quality in Vancouver Lake. Ecology funds these types of projects in Clark County through the Water Quality Combined Funding Program.

We also recognize that the Lake River watershed contributes the majority of nitrogen and phosphorous to the lake. Vancouver Lake is on the state's polluted waters list for phosphorous. Addressing pollution inputs is a priority. Improved water quality is not only important for fish and wildlife, but also for the residents and visitors recreating in Clark County. We understand that Vancouver Lake is a highly valued recreational amenity impacted by blue-green algal blooms, bacteria, swim beach closures, and invasive species challenges. These chronic problems are due in part to the lake's shallow depth, hydrology, and nutrient inputs – they are not easily solved.



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The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife received a grant from Ecology's Aquatic Invasive Plant Management Fund to complete an Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan to address Eurasian watermilfoil challenges. We expect that Clark County will apply for funding from Ecology to implement milfoil control work next year.

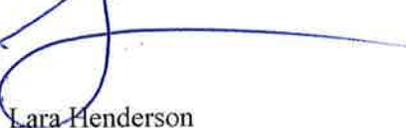
The Vancouver Lake Rowing Club and their commercial pesticide applicator obtained coverage under the Aquatic Plant and Algae Management General Permit for treatment of Vancouver Lake to address heavy populations of Eurasian watermilfoil. This permit also allows the use of phosphorus inactivation products to sequester phosphorus in lake sediments. This provides an additional avenue for addressing high phosphorus in the Lake, which is one of the drivers of algae blooms. However, phosphorus inactivation treatments are not a permanent, long-term solution. Continued work on reducing nutrient inputs to the lake is important for water quality. In addition to invasive species work, local partners may also consider applying to the Freshwater Algae Management Fund to complete a Lake Cyanobacteria Management Plan, which could help achieve nutrient reduction goals.

To make progress towards clean water, Ecology has previously focused its Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and pollution source reduction efforts on watersheds that contribute to Vancouver Lake. The TMDL – or water quality improvement project – process is a science-based approach to cleaning up polluted water so that it meets state water quality standards. The *Burnt Bridge Creek Source Assessment* will be published by November 2020 and an implementation plan will follow. Ecology and local partners are currently implementing recommendations from the Salmon Creek TMDL.

We would like to meet with you to discuss the current efforts to improve water quality at Vancouver Lake, and your request to elevate Vancouver Lake and its tributaries on Ecology's priority list for a formal TMDL study. Ecology also supports and promotes locally-driven efforts and a variety of voluntary approaches and funding opportunities to improve water quality in Vancouver Lake. Rian Sallee, Ecology's Vancouver Field Office Manager, is our point of contact for Vancouver Lake and will reach out to your staff to coordinate a meeting either before or during the 2020 Legislative Session. Rian Sallee can be reached at rian.sallee@ecy.wa.gov or (360) 690-7170.

Thank you for your interest in protecting clean water for all Washingtonians.

Sincerely,



Lara Henderson
Water Quality, TMDL Program Planner

cc: The Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor
Clark County Council
Shawn Hennessee, Clark County Manager
Kevin Tyler, Clark County Lands Manager
Port of Vancouver Commissioners
Juliana Marler, Executive Director, Port of Vancouver
Mayor Ann McEnerny-Ogle, City of Vancouver
Vancouver City Council
Eric Holmes, Vancouver City Manager