



DEQ

FEB 16 2011

Water Quality

February 7, 2011

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Dick Pederson, Director

Fred Warner Jr.
Commission Chair
fwarner@bakercounty.org

Dear Mr. Pederson,

Tim L. Kerns
Commissioner
tkerns@bakercounty.org

The Baker County Board of Commissioners would like to comment on Oregon's Fish Consumption Rate and its use in setting water quality standards for toxic pollutants. The Board of Commissioners is cognizant of the need for high quality water but have concerns about the process for achieving this laudable goal.

Our concerns are highlighted as follows:

Carl E. Stiff, M.D.
Commissioner
cestiff@bakercounty.org

- 1) We believe that adequate protections exist in statute and administrative rule to achieve water quality standards. The existence of naturally occurring elements in areas of the state can skew water standards and should be taken into account.
- 2) Standards derived by using a consumption factor of 175grams/day will result in the most stringent standard of any state in the nation which will further restrict economic development endeavors and result in additional costs for Oregon's businesses. This will lead to job losses and fewer new jobs.
- 3) The cost analysis for these new regulations were not fully explored and we believe the conclusions of the Fiscal Impact and Implementation Advisory Committee FIIAC, that the end of the pipe treatment would be cost prohibitive for many discharges, states the case for additional study and the need to move slowly when implementing new regulations.
- 4) Existing technology is not capable of treating to the low levels that would result in actual risks to humans.

The Baker County Board of Commissioner urges the Department of Environmental Quality to set the fish consumption rate at 87.5 grams/day. This consumption figure would reflect a 5 times increase. In addition, we urge the DEQ to conduct a cost/benefit analysis prior to implementation of a administrative rule pertaining to water quality standards. We also urge DEQ to exclude salmon from the fish consumption equation since the bulk of its life cycle takes place outside the rivers of Oregon.

Please consider this question carefully. We urge you to use caution when expanding environmental regulations as it can be devastating to our economic, social and cultural values as Oregonians. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Warner, Jr." with a small flourish at the end.

Fred Warner, Jr., Chairman
Baker County Board of Commissioners