



STATE OF WASHINGTON

November 7, 2007

To the Members of the 5248 Committee:


We are pleased that you have begun your work together under the auspices of SSB 5248 and with the assistance of the Ruckelshaus Center. We share your interest in a strong agricultural economy and a healthy environment. We want to see these goals harmonized in an effective set of long-lasting solutions to the challenge of protecting critical areas on agricultural lands in a way that ensures the viability of agriculture.

Certainly, past approaches to resolution have not been fruitful due to a divergence of opinions on what state policy should be. We are optimistic that with the collective knowledge and good will of those at the table, your work will result in the development of a set of effective recommendations. Those of us in the Legislature and in the Executive branch are ready to seriously consider your recommendations, knowing they will be fiscally responsible, innovative, and practical.


We believe that the time out from new critical areas regulation provided by SSB 5248 allows for the deliberate mutual exploration of issues, options, and identification of the needed ingredients for an effective policy. Therefore, the state has invested in efforts of the 5248 Committee as the forum for resolution of the issues outlined in SSB 5248. In essence, this legislation asks everyone with concerns on these issues to make their best effort through the 5248 process, rather than through other individual channels; and to do everything they can to help this process reach an agreed upon solution and to bring the results of this common effort to the Legislature for the 2010 session. It is our intent to honor and see through the completion of the SSB 5248 process without further legislative action until the final report is delivered to the Legislature by September 1, 2009. Resolution of these difficult issues will require everyone's focus and effort, and a solution that has broad support will have the best chance of helping our environment and our agricultural economy.


As such, we look forward to your progress reports and to your recommendations in 2010. We thank each of you and your organizations for your commitment and efforts.

Sincerely,


Christine O. Gregoire
Governor


Frank Chopp
Speaker of the House


Lisa Brown
Senate Majority Leader


Richard DeBolt
House Minority Leader


Mike Hewitt
Senate Republican Leader

