



# News Release

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Cathy Wolfe  
District One  
Diane Oberquell  
District Two  
Kevin O'Sullivan  
District Three

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 2, 2001**

**Contact: Sue Davis, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, (360) 754-4111**

## **COUNTY SEEKS PUBLIC HELP WITH SHELLFISH PROTECTION.**

OLYMPIA -- Steps must be taken to clean up pollution in two bodies of water in Thurston County, and officials are asking area residents to help guide the community's response. Late last year, the State Department of Health shut down some commercial shellfish harvest areas in Henderson Inlet and Nisqually Reach due to fecal coliform contamination. RCW 90.72 requires the County to set up a shellfish protection district(s) to address the underlying water quality problems when shellfish growing areas are downgraded. Area residents are being asked to help decide the boundaries for the shellfish protection district(s), the programs and activities to alleviate the problem, and how to fund the work. Thurston County Senior Environmental Health Specialist Sue Davis says, "This is a challenging problem because the cause is nonpoint source pollution, which means the contamination is coming from many sources throughout the watersheds. Some of these sources include failing on-site septic systems, domestic and wild animal waste, and storm water runoff.

The law provides latitude in what the shellfish protection district is and does. Before any proposal is drafted County officials are asking residents to get involved. Residents of the two affected watersheds have received a newsletter giving more detailed information. Included in the newsletter is a mail-back response form. The newsletter is also available on the Thurston County web site at [www.co.thurston.wa.us](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us). An **OPEN HOUSE** is set for **FEBRUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 PM AT THE LACEY COMMUNITY CENTER** at 6729 Pacific Avenue SE. Area residents can learn more about the situation and share their concerns and opinions about water quality issues and a future protection district with County officials. Public comment received will be used to draft options for the district(s). Future workshops are scheduled for the coming months to get input on the proposed district. The shellfish protection district(s) will be adopted in June or July.

For more information contact Sue Davis at (360) 754-4111 or visit the shellfish pages at [www.co.thurston.wa.us](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us).

-30-

[Center and type "-more-" when text will not fit on single page]  
[Type "-30-" to denote end of press release]