



# News Release

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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## COUNTY CONTINUES WORK ON SHELLFISH DISTRICT

OLYMPIA -- Thurston County Commissioners have received recommendations for clean up of two shellfish areas, but will wait before officially adopting any of the measures. The recommendations were created by committee, under requirements contained in the Puget Sound Management Plan. The committee was comprised of representatives of local jurisdictions, affected agencies, shellfish growers and the Tribes. Their work is the first step of a two-tiered plan to improve water quality in Henderson Inlet and the Nisqually Reach. While many of the suggestions made in the Response Strategy are good ones, commissioners say they will wait for the public to have a full say before deciding what steps to incorporate into a county shellfish protection district plan. "We certainly appreciate all the hard work that has gone into creation of the response strategy and we thank all those who contributed." says commission chairman Kevin J. O'Sullivan, "But we want to make sure that the public has every opportunity to help decide what actions to take, before we formally adopt any plan."

Thurston County officials will take the response strategy into consideration as the county moves forward with the second part of the process, the creation of the shellfish protection district, which is to be finalized this summer. The formation of such a district is required under state law. (RCW 90.72) Area residents are being asked to help decide the big questions about the district-

- \* The size of the district(s) and whether there are separate districts for Henderson Inlet and the Nisqually reach.
- \* The types of activities undertaken to improve water quality.
- \* How to pay for the activities.

An open house was held in February to acquaint citizens with the situation, and several more public meetings are planned. O'Sullivan says, "We hope folks will take advantage of the process to advise us regarding the best way to proceed with this important environmental challenge." County officials have undertaken an extensive public process including community interviews, meetings, surveys and other outreach to help design the community's response to the water quality problems and shellfish closures.

The next public meeting will be held April 12th at the Lacey Community Center.

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