

**WHATCOM COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Elizabeth Kosa
Director**



NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive, and The Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

THROUGH: Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Director *ek*

FROM: Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager *gsto*

DATE: May 13, 2025

RE: Amendment No. 1 to State of Washington Department of Ecology Grant Agreement for WRIA 1 Collaborative Water Supply Planning

Please find attached for your review a copy of Amendment No. 1 to the grant agreement between Whatcom County and the State of Washington Department of Ecology for technical studies to support WRIA 1 collaborative water supply planning. The authorized amendment will be signed electronically through DocuSign.

Requested Action

Public Works respectfully requests that the County Council authorize the County Executive to sign this agreement.

Background and Purpose

The Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1 Watershed Management Board (WMB), and its predecessors, have been working for decades to resolve long-standing contentious water issues. In 2024, the Washington Department of Ecology filed a water rights adjudication in WRIA 1 that raises the urgency of resolving these issues. In light of the adjudication, the Washington State Legislature provided \$700,000 in grant funding to the WMB, with Whatcom County as the fiscal agent, to conduct technical studies to support the development of water supply and in-stream flow solutions and to develop and implement a collaborative process to identify local solutions for water availability issues in WRIA 1. The collaborative process has not yet come to fruition, but several technical studies have been identified that will support this process once implemented. This amendment will provide additional funding to Whatcom County, on behalf of the WMB, to conduct three additional technical studies that can be used to support a collaborative process to identify local solutions for water availability issues in WRIA 1. The WMB has approved three technical studies to be conducted using \$214,400 in additional grant funds to: 1) conduct phase 1 of an investigation of the impacts of agricultural tile drains on instream flows, 2) use the Whatcom Groundwater Model to evaluate the impacts of potential wetland enhancements, and 3) conduct preliminary assessments of the feasibility of storage projects at two locations in the South Fork Valley.

Funding Amount and Source

This agreement will provide Whatcom County with \$214,400 in additional funds for a total contract amount of \$700,000 to conduct technical studies to support a collaborative process. Whatcom County will be reimbursed for expenses under this agreement and no match is required. Budget authority for this agreement is provided in the 2025 Natural Resources budget.

Please contact Gary Stoyka at extension 6218 if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.

Encl.
Grant Agreement