

21 April 2021

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WHATCOM COUNTY
COUNCIL

Whatcom County Council
311 Grand Avenue, Suite # 105,
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Chairman Buchanan –

I am writing you today to voice my recommendation to reject a current proposal to eliminate waterfowl hunting on county property in Drayton Harbor. The proposed amendment to Whatcom County Code 9.32, originally introduced on September 4, 2019, is based upon a perceived yet unbased threat to public safety. As a dedicated waterfowl hunter with over four decades of experience, please allow me to directly refute the main issues promulgated within the aforementioned document.

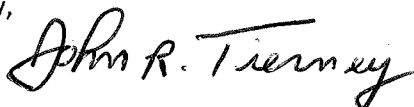
An existing three hundred (300) yard buffer zone from shore currently exists within Drayton Harbor and the adjoining Birch Bay. Current technology (ex. onX mapping) allows hunters operating from watercraft to easily stay within county property while pursuing a time-honored tradition. Additionally, as a shotgun only hunting area, all non-toxic pellets discharged from said boats will fall harmlessly into the water well before reaching any adjacent shoreline. My career as a Field Artillery officer with extensive training in exterior ballistics provides additional credence to this statement. Furthermore, recent discussions with local Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife police officers attest to the fact that both the danger to public safety and attendant enforcement problems are virtually nonexistent.

Also, under the proposed ordinance, Lummi Tribal members can continue gunning on traditional Drayton Harbor hunting grounds that are open and unclaimed. While I do unequivocally support the Native treaty rights of this tribe, excluding other American citizens is markedly discriminatory. It is clearly impossible to delineate an exception to the proposed "No Shooting" zone for one group and remain legally sufficient under the basis of safety as currently recognized by Washington State law (RCW 9.41.300 (2) (a)).

I certainly respect the desire of Drayton Harbor residents to enjoy the tranquility of this unique ecosystem free of danger to themselves. However, the existing Whatcom County framework allows for safe waterfowl hunting to continue during highly regulated and brief seasons each year. I therefore strongly recommend that this misguided proposal be unanimously voted "No" and rejected accordingly.

Point of contact for this letter is the undersigned at (425) 891-2302.

Sincerely,



John R. Tierney
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)