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Section 6

Satellite System Program

6.1 Introduction

The concept of satellite systems has evolved from general guidance contained in planning handbooks published by the State Department of Health (DOH), to legislation enacted by the 1991 State Legislature. In general terms, a satellite system program is intended to address situations where small public water systems (i.e. Group B) are proposed in areas remote from the supply facilities of larger existing systems. Extension or expansion of existing facilities may not be practical in the foreseeable future. For this reason, the new system must be developed as an independent or "stand-alone" facility. These circumstances may occur either within or outside of designated service areas.

The 1991 State legislation added RCW 70.116.134 which requires DOH to adopt rules which establish criteria for designating individuals or water purveyors as qualified satellite system management agencies.

6.2 Skagit County Program

Recognizing that the Public Utility District No. 1 of Skagit County (PUD) has the authority and capability to provide water service throughout Skagit County (County), the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) identified the PUD as the Satellite Management Agency (SMA). In this capacity, the PUD will work cooperatively with existing water utilities to coordinate service areas and service delivery to meet the requirements of State and federal laws. If an existing system does not have the resources to meet these requirements, the PUD will assist in the evaluation of transferring ownership and operation of the system to the PUD, based upon an appropriate system upgrade and financing plan. Where new service is required which cannot be provided by other existing systems, consistent with the utility service review procedure (USRP) provided in this Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP), the PUD will provide service through system extension or establishment of a new remote system. As a condition of providing service, the PUD shall own the public water supply system.

The following PUD policies and programs are designed to meet the public water supply needs in that portion of the County not designated in the CWSP as the service area of other water supply utilities, and in those areas where existing utilities request the assistance of the PUD.

6.2.1 Urban Growth Areas - Existing and New Systems

Service Area

In accordance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the PUD will develop a Capital Improvement Plan for those urban areas and portions of the rural area that have been designated the PUD service area. Currently, those areas include Sedro Woolley, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and La Conner urban growth areas (UGAs), rural areas adjacent to the UGAs, and a portion of Fidalgo Island. The PUD is committed to working with other water utilities, such as the City of Anacortes, to cooperatively meet the urban growth needs of Skagit County through intergovernmental agreement for supply development and system operation.

System Merger/Extension

The PUD will accept responsibility for water systems located within the PUD's designated urban service area which are proposed for receivership, following the development by the PUD of a system improvement and financing plan to merge the small system with the PUD system. The PUD will not accept ownership responsibility for the system until it has been upgraded to meet PUD urban design standards to ensure compliance with State regulatory requirements.

Urban Standards

The PUD will clearly identify its urban service standards for service extensions and system upgrades. These standards will meet, and may exceed, the CWSP minimum standards, but shall not be inconsistent with applicable comprehensive plans.

6.2.2 Non-Urban Growth Areas - Existing and New Systems

Service Area

Existing public water systems located in the Non-UGAs have been inventoried. Service areas have been identified for those systems with 100 permanent connections or more, and smaller systems indicating an intent to expand their service area. For the remaining systems, the current service area is assumed to be the future service area.

The PUD will assist the County in the evaluation of existing water systems to determine their capability to provide an "adequate water supply" as defined under Section 63 of the GMA (RCW 19.27.097). The County will refer new water service requests to the designated water system when it is determined that existing systems have the capacity and capability to meet the State and

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federal Safe Drinking Water Act requirements for a designated service area and the associated projected water demand. This determination will be made by DOH, in cooperation with Skagit County Planning and Permit Center (SCPPC) and Skagit County Health Department (SCHD).

When new service is requested in areas not specifically assigned to existing utilities through the CWSP, the County shall first refer the developer to adjacent purveyors with an approved water system plan (WSP) that provides for expansion. An existing system shall be considered "adjacent" to the proposed development if service can be provided with a service line extension not to exceed 1/2 mile in length. If service will not be provided by an adjacent utility, the developer will be referred to the PUD.

System Merger/System Extension/Remote Systems

If an existing system is unable or unwilling to extend water service to meet existing or new water service needs, the PUD will assist the property owners or County (following appropriate land use decision) in evaluating the service options by: 1) identifying requirements to upgrade the existing system; 2) establishing a stand alone remote PUD system; or, 3) extending the existing PUD system to serve the properties. New system and service requirements in the undesignated portion of the County will be the responsibility of the PUD subject to the determination of the appropriate method of service and execution of agreements. The PUD will not accept ownership or operating responsibility for an existing or new rural system until the system meets rural design standards to ensure compliance with State regulatory requirements.

Consistent with the program established for UGAs, the PUD will accept responsibility for water systems proposed for receivership within that portion of the County not included in designated service areas.

Non-Urban Growth Area Standards

Service extensions and remote systems in non-UGAs shall meet the CWSP design standards. (Note: standards will typically be based on the requirements to provide domestic/applicable-fire flow water service. The hydraulic design will be based on maintaining adequate pressure to implement a comprehensive PUD rural area water system).

6.3 Conformance With State Program

It is the intent of the WUCC that the County shall identify the PUD as the responsible agency for the County program defined herein, and the PUD shall adopt

the DOH standards for determining financial viability as part of its satellite system program.

6.4 Appeal Process Relationship

An appeal process has been established for resolution of disputes arising in implementation of the CWSP. This process is described in Section 5, including conditions under which a new public water system may be created in the non-designated area of the County. This appeal process is applicable to provisions of the Satellite System Program.

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