STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

P.O. Box 47600 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7600
(360) 407-6000 • TDD Only (Hearing Impaired) (360) 407-6006

March 15, 2004

Mr. Don Nelson, Director
Environmental and Engineering Programs
Washington State Department of Transportation
PO Box 47321
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: WSDOT's 2004 revised Highway Runoff Manual (HRM)

Dear ~~Mr. Nelson~~ Don:

This letter is to document our agreements regarding this manual. This version of the HRM is a substantial improvement in many ways over the existing HRM. Specifically, this version:

- Incorporates current science
- Provides a statewide approach for managing stormwater
- Considers the watershed context of projects
- Replaces conflicting information presented in other previous WSDOT manuals
- Merges the planning and design of stormwater-related project elements into the WSDOT project development process
- Encourages application of low impact techniques.

We have appreciated WSDOT's cooperation with Ecology during the manual's revision process. Both agencies committed substantial resources to this effort. By working together in developing the manual, we significantly shortened the approval time.

This version of the highway runoff manual is intended to be equivalent to Ecology's 2001 Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington (SMMWW) and the upcoming Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington (SMMEW). WSDOT developed this manual as a directional document to provide stormwater management requirements and standards for its projects. In other words, WSDOT asserts that projects designed in accordance with the revised Highway Runoff Manual will achieve compliance with federal and state water quality regulations per the presumptive approach.

Ecology will continue to honor the direction put forth in the '95 Highway Runoff Manual plus WSDOT Instructional Letter 4020.02 for WSDOT projects going to ad during the '03-'05 biennium. Ecology conditionally approves the revised Highway Runoff Manual for use by WSDOT as an equivalent approach to the SMMWW, and for compliance with Ecology permits, including 401 certifications, with the following conditions:

- Items listed in the manual as "guidance" must be followed.

3-18

- Unless the existing condition is forested, projects requiring Ecology approval for flow control in Western Washington, per an individual permit, will need to have the flow control standard decided and approved on a case-by-case basis;
- The average daily traffic (ADT) threshold for enhanced treatment is approved for WSDOT projects going to ad through the '05-'07 biennium. However, Ecology plans to review this threshold through an expanded examination of existing data and/or the collection of additional data;
- WSDOT may use the flow control-exempted water bodies included in its Instructional Letter 4020.02 that have been incorporated into the revised HRM. Based on the outcome of the WSDOT/Ecology sponsored large-river exemption study in progress, we may approve a revised exempted waterbodies list.

Please note that WSDOT's future NPDES permit for municipal stormwater may set additional or revised conditions. The timing of those conditions will be spelled out in the permit.

With the conditions listed above, Ecology and WSDOT expect this manual to be equivalent to the upcoming SMMEW. However, the SMMEW is not final. The revised HRM is approved for use in Eastern Washington, subject to the conditions above. When the SMMEW is completed, we will notify you if any changes to the conditions are necessary for eastern Washington projects going to ad beyond the '05-'07 biennium.

Ecology will allow the use of the Highway Runoff Manual by local governments provided:

- All the conditions listed above apply;
- The manual is used only for road and other linear transportation projects;
- The exemption in Section 2-2.2 for upgrades from BST to other surfaces is not allowed for non-WSDOT projects;
- All of the manual requirements, including maintenance, post-construction requirements, and requirements from other WSDOT guidance documents are followed.

When the SMMEW is completed, we will issue conditions for the use of the HRM by local governments in Eastern Washington.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Melodie Selby at 360.786.6018 or Ed O'Brien at 360.407.6438.

Sincerely,

Richard K. Wallace, Manager
Water Quality Program