

From Gene Hester and the Concerned Citizens on Tide Creek Road.

To the Columbia County Planning Committee Members, Your utmost attention to this letter is greatly appreciated.

This has been a long road in the defense of protecting our water. I/we have sent lots of illustrations from very reliable sources outlining aquifers and what can and does happen to clustered communities such as ours. The issues we are having according to hydrologists is from our current state of extended groundwater shortage and clustered use. It is just not only here it is all over the place that people are having issues. I urge you to call a hydrologist to hear this for yourself. When the water starts going out faster than it is coming in you are going to have issues. We have depleted groundwater issues that feed aquifers and our population is growing. Pretty simple.

Dennis Orłowski, Hydrologist for our area that works for OWRD (Oregon Water Resources Department) says that our area has all the indicators of well interference. In 2015/16 after Peterson's drilled their new well is when myself and others started having issues. I am not throwing a rock here. They needed a well for their homes and cattle and like anyone else they drilled one. Then in 2021 Meador's moved in down below my property. Her well was doing about 2 gallons a minute. She would run out when she watered her horses. So she dug a new well. That's when my and my neighbors water issues got even worse. I used to run out of water with extended use but now since Mrs. Meador drilled her new well I run out quickly. McMullens told me I only had 2 gallons a minute and around 26' of static water in my casing after that. It's called well interference. I tried pressure washing a couple of weeks ago and I ran out of water in 20 minutes. I have bought 3, 300 gallon totes that I trickle feed water into now so I can pressure wash and use outside water for other things. It takes 32 hours to trickle feed 1 tote. I put it on that slow so not to have any chance of interfering with regular daily use. They say it will actually be better on the aquifer when we are all on storage tanks because it lessens the drain on heavier daily use. I tell you it is an ugly feeling when you run out of water. It's a pretty weird scenario. Those of you that have experienced this can identify with what I am saying. You automatically reach for the faucets. There is no toilet. You can't flush or take a shower or get a drink or wash your hands or vegetables. You can't wash your cloths. You buy bottled water and haul water for toilets. You brush your teeth with a bottle of water and sponge bathe with cold water and a wash rag. There is nothing to wash dishes with so you buy a ton of paper plates. You go over to your kids house to get a real shower and haul in more water. I have been in my home for 40 years so well owners do and will

have issues. Fixable issues hopefully. There are people all over the NW that have lost their wells permanently . Google it. I could of cut and pasted a whole article from USGS about peoples aquifers being sucked right out from the bottom of their wells. I have supplied a ton of literature and illustrations on that subject. If you have a home that you have to have water delivered to your storage tanks you can kiss your property values goodbye plus have a big never-ending expense. Chad Moon over at Kalama Public works told me how much public water he sells to a water truck delivering all over the place on the side of that hill. Well water loss in Oregon is so big that the state has a program that if you qualify for you can get a storage tank installed by the state and they pay for or subsidize the water delivery and costs. I heard it ran out of money and they are trying to get another round. Google it. I only say Google it because you will also run into a lot of other stuff and it is very dire to us that someone is seeing that us longtime residents really are at the mercy of your help.

Heres the solid facts.

We have 13 wells very near and across from Peterson proposed subdivision.

7 are on storage tanks.

4 need storage tanks (2 of us are going on tanks soon and 2 say they cannot afford it)

1 no issues but they have had a re-drill and report usage is very low

1 well is dead.

All the homes except for one have only 2 people living in them. One has 3 people because they have a daughter still at home.

So our wells all have low usage.

I have sent you maps from OWRD showing between Deer Island and Rainier there are;

45 dead wells

26 altered wells

77 re drilled wells

About Us;

We have lived on this hill between 24 and 53 years. Most over 30 years.

90% of us are retired. Most on fixed incomes.

This is effecting 37 people

a lot of us are over 70 and some in their 80's

Most of us are Veterans.
Some of us are war Veterans.

One of us is a retired Columbia County Sheriff and war Veteran.
He is also totally crippled.

Many cannot attend the meetings because of mobility issues
You can now see why they have ask Frank and I and John to be their spokesmen.

I am not trying to pull the heart strings card here. I am just trying to relate to the committee that we are not a business. We are being threatened by a business. Believe me this is all about money to them. It is a business and nothing else. Believe me. After a lot of investigating it's way bigger than I ever thought.

We are just a group of hard working people that have been paying and still are paying lots of taxes and spending our money in Columbia County for many, many, many years. We are like your parents or relatives or family. Just normal people that raised their families and are loving their Grandkids. Imagine Your people loosing their water. Our homes and health and safety are under a more probable than possible threat. Referring to all the USGS reports I have entered it shows and talked about how small communities with weakened aquifer's and what happens when new developments or homes move in and suck the water right out from under the bottom of their wells. After that their septic systems can leach nitrates into the aquifer and that will ruin the entire aquifer. This scenario can also dry up the aquifer . We are at another disadvantage. We are uphill from the proposed development. Aquifers have an entrance and a gate. I quote Agnes Peterson "Water Runs Downhill" "Its Gravity". You can see on a topography map that it runs downhill from us into a collector that drains and goes all the way past Nicolai Cutoff. Frank Halls house is in the middle. From Franks house over to the bottom of that collector swale There is 80 ft. elevation differance. The wells they have drilled so far are between 304 and 324 ft. That makes their wells on lower elevation plains making them outreach most everything up here. Now Quoting Justin McMullen from McMullen Water " The Guy With The Deepest Well Wins".

Dennis Orlowski from OWRD said that their hands are tied on these subdivisions because homes are exempt from having to have a permit. He says it is all very frustrating to the Water Masters because subdivisions are definately causing issues in the surrounding areas that they are built in. He went on to say that this situation we are in is causing a real stir in the ranks of his uppers and they are seeing where change is going to have to occur. Unfortuanatly not in time to help us. Dennis said that there was a huge lawsuit in Washington State over a situation like this and it is producing some ruling change.

Dennis has suggested we fill out a Dry Well Report. He sent me a dry well report. We are all filling out a dry well report. We will officially be on State OWRD record with our well issues recorded soon. This is a public letter so Petersons can now know we all will have our issues recorded very soon at OWRD. A dry well report is for anyone that has changes in their wells. That includes running out of water, having to re drill, coning cave ins, shortening the well, installing storage tanks, changes in static levels and lower GPM. Dennis also is now scheduled to do quarterly well checks on select wells in our group. Our first well checks are in January. Its about a 30 or 40 minute per well process.

I Told Dennis about how all of the USGS reports that I have seen show that our area is a really low yield water wells area. He said that that is absolutely correct. Dennis called our area a concentrated area of concern. The aquifer is Marine Semidry Rock. He also told me that 4GPM is considered very very low and highly suggests future problematic issues. I ask Dennis if he would please come to the Planning committee meeting on Nov. 6th. He said he had to politely decline because they were not allowed to do that.

We are asking the Planning Committee to please consider the fact that there is very verifiable evidence that there are extreme water issues in the very near vicinity that the Peterson's are asking to build a sub division. The 7 storage tank wells and 2 pending (would be 4 if the people had the money) and the 1 dried up well is huge evidence that things are not as they should be to support 8 4 bedroom homes and 8 septic fields in the long run. We all used to have stellar wells. Things changed. Your proposed clustered subdivision is likely to cause us all dire straights that most of these long time residents cannot endure. There is verifiable evidence that this is a very weak water well area. Dennis Orłowski Hydrologist from OWRD will confirm that our area is very problematic. Our whole area is full of bad wells. Please consider all together Our combined well issues, the statements from the Water Master proclaiming how bad this area is, USGS illustrations showing what happens, National Geological mapping showing our area has the poorest score for sustaining water wells, The OWRD map showing 45 dead wells, 26 altered well, and 77 failures with re drilled wells just between Deer Island and Rainier. They say with tanks we can last a very long time. We are really hoping that with the shining proof of our combined water issues that the Planning Comittee would not want to risk the Health and Safety of us very long time residents. If there was only a small chance would it still be worth risking ? I am sure there is a huge history of really great wells having huge issues. Mine and the ones around me used to all be great wells.

With all of this information public and our wells tested and our problems recorded at OWRD. Then 8 homes and wells and septic sytems are installed. Then all the people start having problems or we have well interference and claim our water

rights against them.... Who is liable?

We are all carrying a great burden and load over this whole ordeal. The people here are currently burdoned with the worry about the cost of patching the wells that they have much less a pending disaster. After all of these years living here we should not be living under the great big dark cloud of progress for \$\$\$\$ lining the Peterson's pockets. The Petersons have lots of money and lots and lots of land. If they say that they cannot put these houses elsewhere they are not being anywhere near honest. Please take the burden off of the elderly residents on Tide Creek Road . They surely did not ask for this tremendous worry and do not deserve it so please relieve them from it. Put the burden on Petersons. Make them prove there are no issues . Make them prove their wells would not cause Interfearance.

Please do not put us in the position of apeals. Everyone has really had enough. Please Understand. This is just not right.

Our Sincere Thanks For Your Time And Attention, Gene Hester

Gene Hester

