



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

OFFICE OF DRINKING WATER

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August 15, 2022

Mark Rigos, P.E.
Deputy City Administrator / Public Works Director
City of North Bend
920 SE Cedar Falls Way
North Bend, WA 98045

Mr. Rigos;

The Washington State Department of Health strives to ensure that every new and existing public water system acquires and maintains technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity to deliver safe and reliable drinking water. Larger public water systems have improved TMF capacity, source and equipment redundancy, ability to access funding, and economies of scale to provide safe and reliable drinking water now and into the future.

This letter is written regarding the proposed consolidation of the City of North Bend and Sallal Water Association water systems. It is our understanding that Sallal has not been able to provide water service to new developments within North Bend's urban growth area and that Sallal's Board recently voted to initiate an emergency moratorium on new water connections to allow time to conduct a review of its customer demands.

While the owner has the fiduciary responsibility for the water system and the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water, we know obstacles can get in the way of that goal. Our Office of Drinking Water (ODW) promotes water system partnerships. Partnerships can take a wide variety of forms, including complete merging of two or more water systems, an interconnection in cases of emergency, or sharing an operator or equipment.

With respect to ODW oversight, both the City of North Bend and the Sallal Water Association have green operating permits indicating substantial compliance with the state's drinking water regulations and adequate for existing uses. We ask water systems to consider consolidation when looking to improve capacity and sustainability. Consolidation presents advantages in terms of improved health and financial equity including, but not limited to enhanced water quality, proactive compliance with drinking water regulations, and equitable rate structures. This may be a pathway for the City and Sallal to satisfy the aspirations of its community now and into the foreseeable future.

If you would like to discuss this topic further, please contact me at 509-707-7160.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheri K. Miller".

Sheri K. Miller
Field Operations Manager
Office of Drinking Water

c: Derek Pell, Department of Health, ODW Northwest Regional Office Manager