July 25,2016

Director Spackman,

We submit these written comments in opposition to the proposed Groundwater Management Area.

While we understand that management by water call is indeed a recipe for disaster for all parties, administration over and above the current Settlement Agreement is untenable also.

If it is the intent of the Department to identify and include the so called "outliers" into the Groundwater Districts would it not be less challenging to place them within a current Groundwater District that has all of the mechanisms available to these "new" people to be included in the Settlement Agreement?

As two of the people that have spent literally months of volunteer time attempting to save all of the patrons of the Bingham Groundwater District we have a very good read on our constituents. Many are so thoroughly confused by the layers and layers of lawsuit and mitigation plans that we simply cannot expect them to continue working toward implementation of the Settlement Agreement when they now see another hammer being brought to bear. One of the mantra's we hear over and over again is, "why are the Groundwater pumpers solely responsible for the aquifer, when weather and surface water demand are contributing to the ESPA decline".

We understand that the Department is not a party to the Settlement Agreement but has been placed in the position of being the enforcer. Understanding that we wanted to give you a couple of examples of what the Groundwater folks in the Upper Valley are having to deal with:

1. As a per acre average assessments have reached $19-$22, that is with no calculation of crop loss due to pump reductions.
2. Just the three Upper Valley Districts will spend 12.6 million to comply with the flow meter order.
3. Commodity prices across all Upper Valley crops for 2016 are predicted to fall across the board by 37%.
4. As DEQ/EPA have inserted themselves into the recharge site equation, all smaller canals have halted construction of small scale sites due to the capital expenditures required. This means that mitigation water provided by the canals for their dual right holders is now costing between $5-$7 for wheeling costs.
5. Most all GW pumpers have stated that they would rather go out with a bang(curtailment), than a fizzle (incremental increases in pump reductions).

We appreciate your willingness to meet with us and look forward to working through these challenges together. Our goal has and will always be to save our neighbors in the Upper Valley. This to us means keeping the Groundwater and Surface water entities in the Upper Valley working together to the benefit of both.

Sincerely,

Gaylen VanOrden

Jennifer R. Ellis