

Columbia County



Board of Commissioner's

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As a Commissioner for Columbia County, I have a specific perspective on how DEQ interacts with local government. I would like to take this opportunity to provide feedback on some of the experiences I have had with DEQ staff and management over the last few years.

As you are aware, in the era of dwindling resources, we are all being asked to do more with less. This was stunningly apparent during the December 2007 flooding that occurred in Columbia County. The City of Vernonia, in particular, was devastated. DEQ was among the first agencies to contact us regarding how they could help. They offered assistance with emergency solid waste disposal, expediting the necessary requirements so we could provide safe removal of debris for residents and businesses. They worked dilligently after the initial phases of the clean up to help us identify and remove containers with potential contamination from all parts of the county in an effort to prevent more environmental damage and to protect public health. They were especially effective about communicating not only with the County, but also with our federal partners like FEMA and other organizations, including the media. DEQ brought a positive, "can do" approach to the effort for which we are extremely grateful.

DEQ is also actively involved with the Governor's Economic Revitalization Team, working with the County and our cities on important economic development opportunities. We sincerely appreciate how DEQ communicates with local leaders about potential regulatory hurdles and how to tailor solutions to our challenges.

They are responsive to our concerns and provide information when we need it. I feel DEQ is committed to working with local government as a full partner to help us achieve our goals, while protecting the environment. This is a tough balance to strike and while I know that the state budget situation is very challenging right now, I hope that you will do what you can to maintain funding for DEQ's work.

Sincerely,

Tony Hyde
Commissioner