

Greetings.

I had planned on delivering this message in person at my final ISG meeting prior to my scheduled retirement this coming July. However, circumstances in my personal life led me to move my retirement up before an ISG meeting was scheduled to occur.

I first want to thank all of you for your continued participation and efforts to make the ISG process a positive undertaking for all involved. Together, we worked toward a goal of a common sense, practical air permitting program without compromising our main goal of cleaner air. We achieved more effective communication, established more transparency in our processes, formed consistency in the air permitting procedures and strove to eliminate requirements that provided no environmental gain. My hope is that this process continues.

To that end, the Department has charged Frank Steitz with leading the ISG meetings for the DEP. I have personally worked with Frank for over seven years. Of those, the last four have been on a regular basis, and I have found Frank to share the same basic philosophy regarding the air permitting program.

Frank's professional deportment and common sense demeanor is something I can personally attest to. He has been a part of the ISG process from inception, and I have no doubt he will effectively continue utilizing the same approach we have designed over the years. I wish him good luck in this undertaking and again thank you all for your support in this historic effort. (By the way, the fishing in the Inland Northwest is superb.)