



*Friends of Toppenish Creek*

April 14, 2025

Yakima County Code Enforcement  
Yakima County Courthouse  
128 N 2nd Street, Room 232  
Yakima, WA 98901

Dear Yakima County Code Enforcement,

Earlier this year the Friends of Toppenish Creek complained about permit violations at the Fryslan Calf Ranch south of Mabton, WA.

We were told that a meeting took place on March 11, 2025, to address those violations. We received a copy of the meeting summary for that meeting on April 10, 2025, through a public records request. We were surprised that the purpose of the meeting was not to address the violations but to “outline the applicable code requirements for the proposed development and to identify any potential roadblocks to your proposal so you can proceed accordingly.”

Is Yakima County actively addressing egregious violations of permit conditions or is Yakima County creating a pathway for Fryslan to work around the Yakima County code?

This is extremely important because, at this moment, Fryslan Calf Ranch is pumping too much water from a declining aquifer and is reducing groundwater replenishment to the Yakima River.

Remember that, in 2015, Yakima County issued a Determination of Significance (DS) when Fryslan submitted a CUP application for 5,000 calf hutches and withdrawal of 50,000 gallons of groundwater per day due. The DS cited impacts on the aquifers and the river.

Fryslan withdrew that application and resubmitted an application with a “reduced footprint” in 2016. During testimony regarding that 2016 CUP application, opponents emphasized repeatedly that the parent corporation for Fryslan has a history of violating permit conditions. Nevertheless, Fryslan obtained a CUP in 2017 that authorized construction of a facility with 1,500 calf hutches. Now we know that neighbors’ stated concerns were justified.

According to the summary minutes for the March 11, 2025 meeting:

*Based on concerns raised by neighboring property owners, as well as review of aerial photography, it appears that the existing CAFO has expanded without the required permitting and without environmental review under SEPA. Based on aerial photography, it appears that the CAFO has roughly doubled in physical size and expanded onto neighboring parcel(s) that were not part of the original land use approval.*

According to Yakima Code Title 16B.11 and Title 21 there are serious penalties for code violations.

Yakima County Code Title 21 states:

**21.04.020 Violation Penalties Associated with County Approvals**

*In order to further the corrective purposes of this Title, the County will not issue a building or development proposal permit unless the requested permit remediates and corrects the violation or property conditions creating the violation with regard to the site or project for which the permit application is submitted. This includes all payments and/or any civil or monetary penalty imposed for the violation. Any building or development proposal permit that does not correct the violation will be denied.*

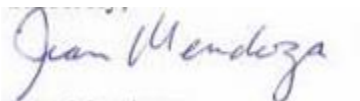
One more thing. Title 21 of the Yakima Code states:

**21.03.050 Administrative Conference.**

*An informal administrative conference may be conducted by Code Enforcement staff at any time for the purpose of facilitating communication among principals or noticed parties and providing a forum for efficient resolution of any violation. Interested parties shall not unreasonably be excluded from such conferences.*

As the complainant, we should have been invited to the March 11, 2025 meeting. Please let us know when future meetings are scheduled so we may attend.

Sincerely,



Executive Director, Friends of Toppenish Creek

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White Swan, WA 98952