



**It's About Time. . . 385.1087**  
.. *for a Change!*  
.. *for an Independent Commissioner!*  
.. *for a More Affordable Jefferson County!*

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Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners  
P.O. Box 1220  
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Gentlemen:

I was asked by Jefferson County Department of Community Development staff to sit on the Critical Areas Ordinance Review Committee (CAORC). It was an amazing, eye-opening experience—and I say that with sincerity.

The Jefferson County Home Builders Association's membership is very diverse. With only a third of them builders, I was representing men and women from many walks of life.

As the weeks turned into many months, I watched the CAORC become highly polarized. This was extremely disturbing because it was my quest—on that committee, as it is in life—to learn as much as I possibly could from the experience.

On May 23, the CAORC majority sent a plea to the Planning Commission to allow an interactive workshop, when Ecology came to Jefferson County on May 30. While we were all excited at the opportunity for Dr. Kenn Brooks to discuss the science with Ecology reps, the DOE had dictated that its staff would present to and take questions from only the PC.

On May 24, I sent this e-mail to the JCHBA, after the HBA's May 23 dinner meeting:

*The reason for this e-mail is in response to the crowd last night. They were appalled that some members of the PC appeared willing to allow the Department of Ecology (DOE) to dictate the parameters of the May 30 "workshop." DOE wants to present to, and take questions from, the PC only. . . essentially eliminating input from the citizens group that has put in thousands of hours over the last nine months. If the PC really wanted to have a balanced informational session, they would want both Dr. Kenn Brooks and DOE available to answer their questions. Brooks is the world-renowned scientist (and Jefferson County resident) who dissected DOE's "Best Available Science" (BAS) and is of the opinion a lot of it is not "best" at all, nor do some of the studies back the claims they're being used for, as evidence.*

*I couldn't put my finger on Brooks' papers on the County's website, so I put them all in one place for you: [www.jeffcohomebuilders.com/CAO/CAO.htm](http://www.jeffcohomebuilders.com/CAO/CAO.htm). I also linked to the County's CAO page...and the HUGE file that has all of the committee's reports in it.*

*Bottom line: Brooks feels the DOE recommended buffers are too extreme in a lot of cases. If you are in support of DOE's wider buffers, that's fine...I would encourage you, however, to wonder why DOE would not be willing to have a healthy discussion, scientist to scientist, to educate our planning commission. They should be able to defend the science that they've published as this state's "BAS."*

*As a citizen wanting to be better educated on the subject, I'd really love to hear both sides! We need to protect our critical areas. Not only are we legally mandated to do so, but it's the right thing to do. On the other hand, having onerous regulations based on bureaucrats' edicts is just wrong. Our forefathers fought long and hard to ensure our right to question authorities.*

Ecology came and talked May 30. At least Dr. Brooks was allowed a few more than his three minutes of public comment.

The passion with which Jill Silver presented her case throughout the CAORC process was inspiring, but she was out-gunned in that environment. I admire that she stuck it out—and I learned a lot from what she offered.

Still frustrated, I wanted the PC and public (and me!) to hear an interactive discussion between Dr. Brooks and someone with at least the equivalent experience. (The Ecology staffers sent May 30 fell short.)

After a minimal response from the JCHBA members to e-mail the PC, I tried another step: I approached Jill Silver with the idea of she (as 10,000 Years Institute) and I (as the JCHBA) co-sponsoring a discussion between Kenn and Fred Weinmann, PhD. Her group and mine...environmentalists and builders...the perceived left and right. Thought it would be about as "fair" as I could get it.

When she didn't respond yes, I went directly to Fred. His fear was that the property rights folks would eat him alive. Even after I assured him that the meeting would be on my turf, with me calling the shots—and everyone would have to play nice—he still didn't bite. Quite frankly, I can't blame him. He didn't know me well enough to know that I could indeed control the meeting I had in mind.

I've thought long and hard about why Ecology refused to discuss the science in an open forum. I realized it was because they didn't have to—they held all of the cards.

I offer this information to you as yet another piece to consider when making your decision on the CAO. Gentlemen, be wise...

Regards,