



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Spokane County prepares for impact from WA Supreme Court decision (Whatcom County v. Hirst)

SPOKANE COUNTY, October 17, 2016 – The recent decision of the Washington State Supreme Court in the case of Whatcom County v. Hirst has forced Counties from across Washington, including Spokane County, to dramatically change the water pre-requisites necessary before building permits can be issued. Throughout last week the Board of County Commissioners discussed with legal counsel, senior staff from the County’s Building and Planning and Water Resources departments, and Commissioners from other Washington counties to address the ramifications of the decision.

As a direct result of the recent Court decision, County governments, including Spokane County, are required to apply new criteria in determining whether a building permit applicant has an available source of water. Now an applicant must provide evidence demonstrating that water is both physically available and legally available.

Chair of the Spokane County Board of County Commissioner’s Shelly O’Quinn stated, “Our number one priority remains the same: To provide excellent customer service to the citizens of Spokane County. The Hirst decision makes it more difficult for anyone seeking a building permit with an exempt well. It ties the hands of our Building and Planning department, because we are mandated to follow the Courts’ ruling. I encourage those affected by this ruling to contact their State Legislators.”

The Spokane County Building and Planning Department will be hosting an informational meeting to provide information concerning the Hirst Decision for the community at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, October 19th in the Spokane County Commissioners Hearing Room in the Public Works Building at 1026 W. Broadway.

Spokane County Building Director, Randy Vissia, stated, “We realize that this court decision will have dramatic impacts for individuals planning to obtain a building permit and we want to make sure that we are doing everything in our power to provide accurate information about the process and to help the community navigate through the complications presented as a result of the Hirst decision.”

About Spokane County

Spokane County government serves 485,000 citizens and 13 municipal jurisdictions, making it the fourth-largest county in the State of Washington. For more information, visit www.spokanecounty.org, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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