

# Group B Public Water Systems

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Policy Unit Supervisor



# Mission

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To protect the health of the people of Washington State by ensuring safe and reliable drinking water.



# Tonight's Presentation

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- 💧 **What is a Group B Public Water System?**
- 💧 **Why are we proposing changes to the rule?**
- 💧 **What are the current requirements?**
- 💧 **What changes are in the draft rule?**

# Tonight's Presentation (cont.)

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- 💧 Provide you with information
- 💧 We are here to listen
- 💧 The State Board of Health (Board) hasn't made any decisions
- 💧 How you can comment:
  - Tonight's breakout groups
  - Comment cards
  - E-mail
  - Formal public hearing

# What is a Public Water System?

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- 💧 **The law defines public water systems as all systems, except:**
  - **A single family residence**
  - or
  - **Up to four homes on the same farm**
- 💧 **Chapter 70.119A Revised Code of Washington (RCW)**

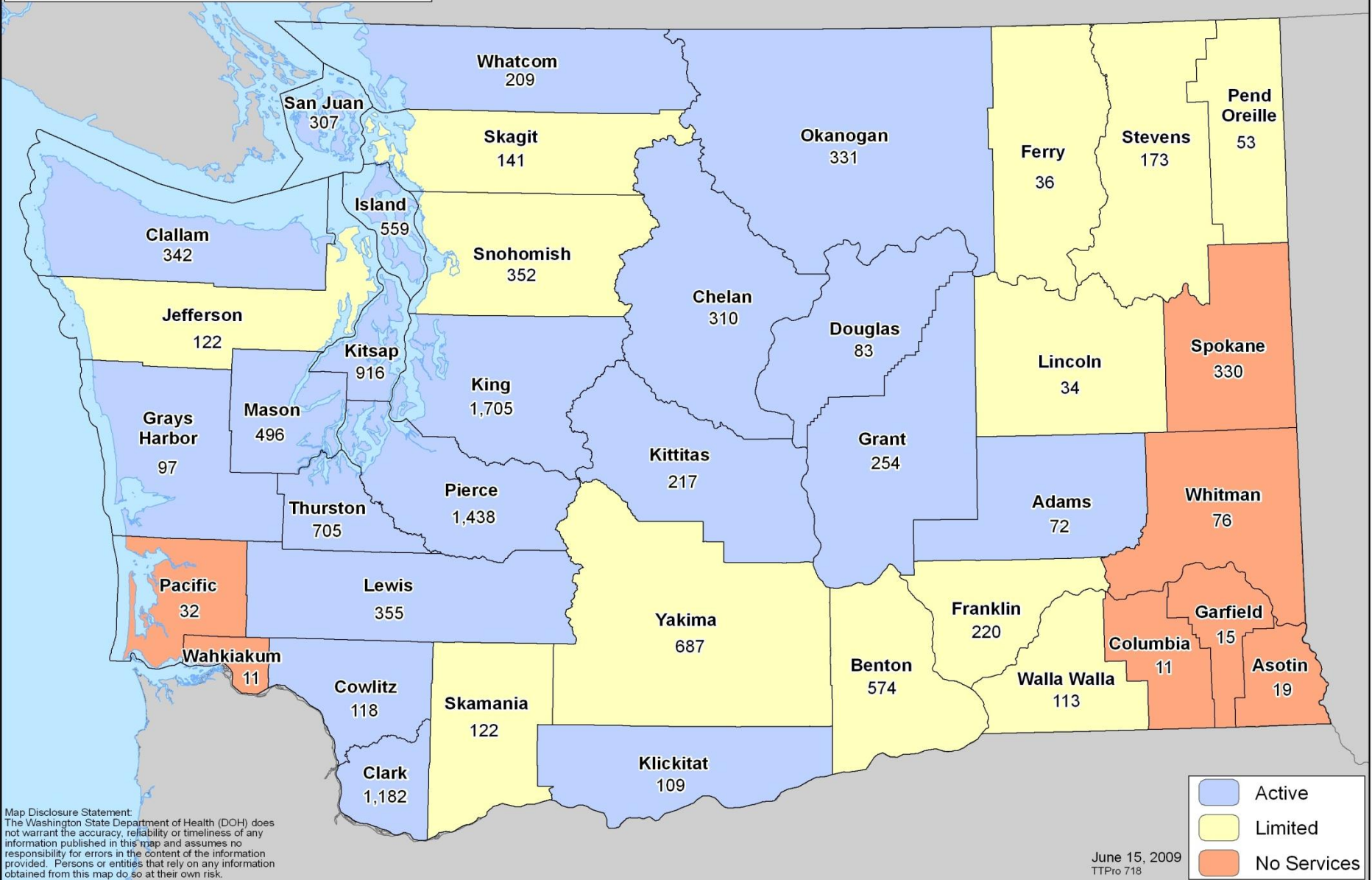
# What is a Group B System?

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- 🔥 **Serve fewer than 15 households and less than 25 people per day**
- 🔥 **Chapter 246-291 Washington Administrative Code (WAC)**
  - adopted by the Board
- 🔥 **Regulated by local health agencies or the state (varies for each county)**

# Washington State Local Health Jurisdictions

## Group B Water System Programs



Map Disclosure Statement:  
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- Active
- Limited
- No Services

# What is a Group A System?

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- 🔥 **Serve 15 or more households or 25 or more people per day**
- 🔥 **Chapter 246-290 WAC**  
– adopted by the Board
- 🔥 **Regulated by the state under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act**

# Tonight's Presentation

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**Why are we proposing  
changes to the rule?**

# Why Are We Proposing Changes?

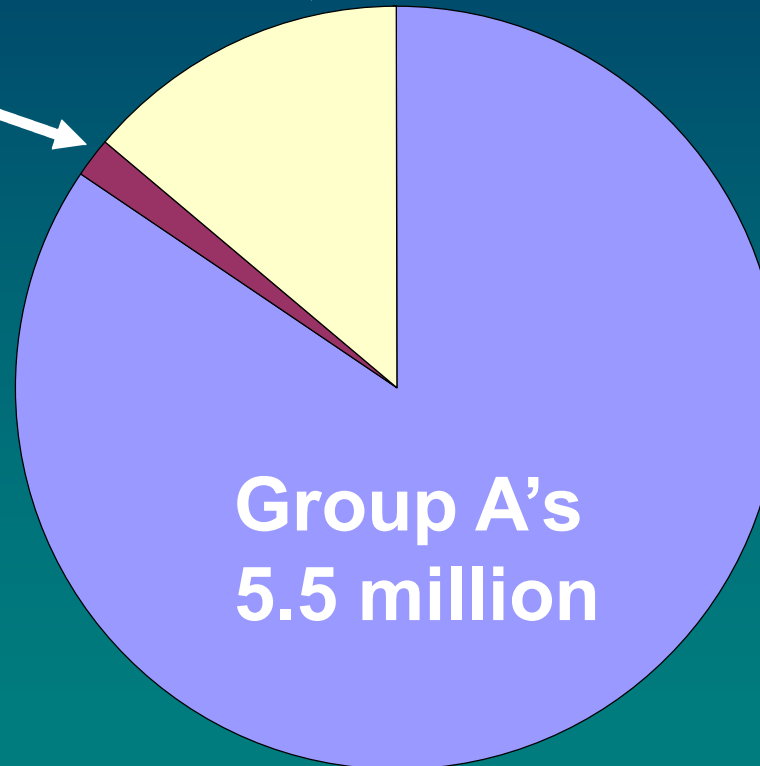
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- 💧 **In 2009, the Legislature and the Governor:**
  - **Eliminated state funding for our oversight of Group B systems**
  - **Changed the law to allow the Board to eliminate ongoing requirements of Group B systems**

# Where We Get Our Drinking Water

Group B's – 110,000

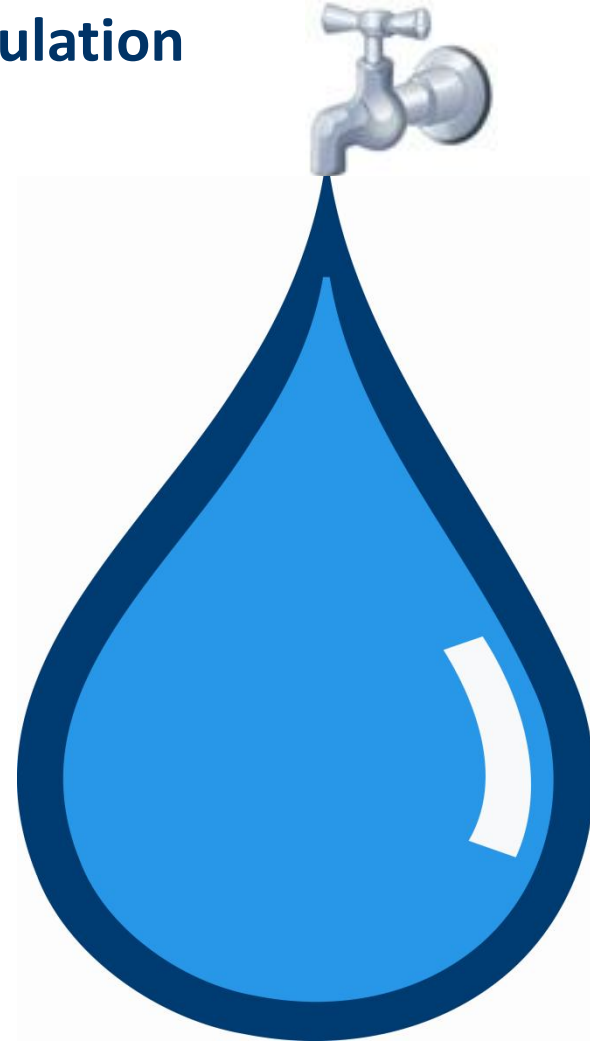
Private wells – 920,000





**Group A:**  
4,121 water systems provide  
water to 83 percent of our state's  
population

**Group B:**  
12,868 water systems  
provide water to 2 percent  
of our state's population



# Why Are We Proposing Changes?

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- 💧 **We want the rule to accurately reflect what we can do**
- 💧 **Without ongoing oversight, we can:**
  - **Improve the “up-front” approval process**
  - **Clearly communicate to system owners and consumers their role in protecting public health**
  - **Allow local health agencies to require more than the state rule**

# Tonight's Presentation

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**What are the current requirements?**

# Current Requirements

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- 💧 **Comprehensive initial monitoring**
- 💧 **Engineering design and system plan**
- 💧 **Satellite management (if available)**

# Current Requirements (cont.)

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- 💧 **Ongoing monitoring**
  - **Sample for coliform bacteria annually**
  - **Sample for nitrate every three years**
- 💧 **System owners must keep their system information updated**
- 💧 **Systems must notify consumers within 28 days if there are water quality problems**

# Tonight's Presentation

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**What changes are in  
the draft rule?**

# Draft Rule Requirements

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- 💧 Comprehensive initial monitoring
- 💧 Engineering design and system plan
- 💧 Satellite management (if available)
  
- 💧 Systems must notify consumers within 24 hours if there are serious water quality problems
- 💧 No monitoring, no updates

# Draft Rule Requirements (cont.)

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## Changes – Source Approval

- 💧 New systems must use a drilled well
- 💧 Wells for new systems must meet primary water quality standards without treatment
- 💧 Why?
  - Drilled wells are safer sources
  - Protection from surface contaminants
  - Group B treatment is not reliable without regular operations and maintenance

# Draft Rule Requirements (cont.)

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## Changes – Design Standards

- 💧 **Design standards for water use:**
  - 750 gallons per residence west-side
  - 1,250 gallons per residence east-side
  - Based on public health and safety needs
- 💧 **This rule isn't about water rights (“exempt wells”)**

# Demand Design Standard

On the Maximum Day...

- 750 gallons per day for western WA
- 1,250 gallons per day for eastern WA



Group B  
Well

$\frac{1}{2}$  acre

350 gpd



350



350



# Draft Rule Requirements (cont.)

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## Changes – Source Approval

- 💧 Clarify which systems must be designed by a professional engineer
- 💧 System approvals under existing rule will be honored
- 💧 Systems existing before 1995 may be “adequate” for current uses

# Draft Rule Requirements (cont.)

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## Variations

- Local health agencies can issue variations to the standards
- State health cannot issue variations
- No variations from the use of average household size to calculate residential population

# Communications and Education

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- 🔥 **Improve our system design guidance (Group B workbook)**
- 🔥 **Make sure expectations for small water systems are easy to understand**
- 🔥 **Provide educational materials to owners**
- 🔥 **Require systems to notify consumers within 24 hours after contamination**
- 🔥 **Public understands what we can do and what we can't do**

# What Won't be Required?

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- Annual coliform bacteria sampling
- Nitrate sampling every three years
- Periodic updates from owners about their system

# Where Are We in the Process?

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- 💧 **We have worked with the Board's Environmental Health Committee**
- 💧 **We have received feedback from local health agencies**
- 💧 **Today, we are discussing the draft rule and taking your feedback**
- 💧 **The Board will consider all ideas – they need to hear yours**

# Tentative Schedule

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**Sept. 2010**

**Public forums**

**Oct. - Nov. 2010**

**Collate feedback**

**Nov. - Jan. 2011**

**Revise rule language**

**Spring 2011**

**Announce public hearing**

**Summer 2011**

**SBOH public hearing**

**Late 2011**

**Rule effective**

# We Want to Hear From You

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- 💧 **Quick break**
- 💧 **Breakout group discussion:**
  - **Water system customers**
  - **Owners / operators / satellite management agencies**
  - **Developers / consultants / local health / others**
- 💧 **Listen and write down what we hear**
- 💧 **Breakout groups report back to everyone**

# For More Information

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**[www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/groupb.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/groupb.htm)**