

EPA Considers the Bainbridge Island Aquifer System for Sole Source Status

Bainbridge Island, WA

April 2012

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency received a petition from two Bainbridge Island residents requesting sole-source status for the island's aquifer systems. EPA has written a "Support Document for Sole Source Aquifer Designation of the Bainbridge Island Aquifer (Draft)" that describes how the aquifer meets the criteria for designation as a sole source water supply.

EPA has made this draft document available for public review. You can submit comments on the draft document from **April 20** through **June 4, 2012**. This fact sheet gives you more information about the sole-source process. It also tells you where to find the document and how to submit your comments.

What is Sole-Source Aquifer Status?

Sole-Source Status Is Part of the Safe Drinking Water Act

The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 authorizes the Sole Source Aquifer Program. A sole source aquifer is an underground water supply that EPA designates as meeting two requirements:

- It must provide local drinking water for at least 50 percent of the people in the area.
- There can be no other feasible source of drinking water in the area.

Bainbridge Island Aquifer System Appears to Meet Sole Source Requirements

The petitioned area includes all of Bainbridge Island (see map). The island is a mix of developed land and forests. Six principal aquifers have been identified on the island. The table on the next page gives information about these aquifers.



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Aquifer System Appears to Meet Sole Source Requirements

Aquifer	Wells	Elevation
Perched Aquifer	4%	More than 200 feet above sea level
Semi-Perched Aquifer	24%	Between 100 and –20 feet
Sea Level Aquifer	53%	Between 40 and –230 feet
Glaciomarine Aquifer	2%	From –400 to –76 feet
Fletcher Bay Aquifer	Less than 1%*	From –690 to –1,010 feet
Bedrock Aquifer	Less than 1%	‡

* This 1% includes the metered Kitsap Public Utility District well and the City of Bainbridge Island Fletcher Bay well. These wells produce about 30% of the estimated total water production for the island.

‡ These wells are a minor source of water. The wells are screened in rocks of the Blakely Harbor and Blakely Formation at the south end of the island.

In addition to showing that the aquifer system provides more than 50 percent of the local water supply, the petitioners must show that no other economically viable alternative water sources exist on the island.

The petitioners evaluated other water sources and found that:

- No potential surface water bodies exist to provide a source of drinking water.

- Piping water across Agate Pass Bridge is too expensive.
- Installation of a desalination plant is also too costly.

In summary, the Bainbridge Island Aquifer System provides all of the water for the island’s residents. No suitable available alternative water sources exist for the island. As a result, the Bainbridge Island Aquifer System appears to meet the EPA standard for a sole source aquifer.

What Does This Mean to Local Residents and Businesses?

The goal of the Sole Source Aquifer Program is to protect the aquifer system from contamination. The Bainbridge Island aquifer system could be contaminated by seawater intrusion, accidental spills, petroleum products, small hazardous waste generators, household hazardous waste disposal, or liquids from a closed landfill. The aquifers could also be contaminated from open ground water areas at sand and gravel mining operations.

Sole source aquifer designation can help state and local efforts protect aquifers, but it does not provide complete protection.

If the EPA designates the Bainbridge Island aquifer system as a sole source, the designation will not affect projects **except** those that:

- Receive federal funding.
- May pose a significant risk of contaminating the aquifer.

EPA does not review private, state, or local projects.

Examples of projects that may be reviewed include road projects, sewage treatment plants, and storm water runoff plans that receive federal monies.

How Can I Comment?

Public Comment Period Ends June 4, 2012

To submit your written comments by **June 4** or to request further community involvement contact **Sue Eastman** at:

✉ US EPA Region 10, OWW-136,
1200 Sixth Ave, Suite 900,
Seattle, WA 98101

✉ eastman.susan@epa.gov.

Please keep your comments brief and include any basis for them.

What Comes Next?

When the comment period ends, EPA will review and consider any comments and will write a final document. Then the Regional Administrator for EPA Region 10 will use the final support document to decide whether to designate the aquifer as a sole source.

EPA will notify the public of the decision through newspaper advertising and press releases. We will also prepare another fact sheet for our mailing list. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, contact Debra Sherbina at sherbina.debra@epa.gov or 800-424-4372 x0247.

Where Can I Get More Information?

You can review copies of the “**Support Document for Sole Source Aquifer Designation of the Bainbridge Island Aquifer (Draft)**” and the original petition at

🏛️ **Bainbridge Island Library,**
Reference Desk,
1270 Madison Ave North,
Bainbridge Island

☎️ (Please call 206-842-4162 for hours)

or

🏛️ **Bainbridge Island City Hall**
280 Madison Ave
Bainbridge Island

Contact **Lance Newkirk** at the Public Works Department. City Hall hours are from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Find the draft support document **online** at
✉️ <http://go.usa.gov/PzI>



The City of Bainbridge Island surveys a domestic well south of Fletcher Bay as part of the city's Groundwater Management Program. This well draws from the deep Glaciomarine Aquifer, one of six Island aquifers.

Photo by City of Bainbridge Island Survey Crew.

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If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact Debra Sherbina at 1-800-424-4372 ext. 0247. TTY users please call the Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339