

For Immediate Release – Friday, December 30, 2005

Contact: Donna Ambrose, Executive Management Analyst
425.388.3883; 206.755.9823

Reardon's Biodiesel Initiative is on the Move

First of County's Fleet to Use Biodiesel Fuel

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon's plans to spark a new biodiesel industry in the County takes its first step as county vehicles began yesterday fueling up with biodiesel B-20 blend.

“This is a first step toward developing a new industry for the County that will help grow our economy and improve our environment.” says Reardon. “Our next step is to encourage the development of a homegrown biodiesel product to serve the entire Snohomish County market.”

About 275 County road maintenance and solid waste division trucks and diesel equipment will begin using the biodiesel fuel at a pumping station in Arlington. Petrocard, the county's existing fuel supplier has cleaned and converted, at their cost, the new tank that will supply the biodiesel product.

“With this new biodiesel initiative we are taking a strong stand for cleaner air and a healthier environment,” says Reardon.

B-20 consists of 20% bio product and 80% low sulfur diesel fuel. In the fall of 2006, ultra low sulfur diesel (ULSD) use will be mandated by the federal government. The pilot test of this new fuel will determine whether the blended biodiesel product is a viable and cleaner alternative to using ULSD.

By comparison, regular diesel fuel generates 300-500 parts per million (PPM) of atmospheric particulates while, use of ULSD reduces that amount to about 15 ppm or less. The biodiesel blended fuels are even cleaner and expectations are for vehicles using the fuel to experience a further decrease to below 5 ppm.

The impact on the environment is dramatic. For example, it is estimated by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency that use of biodiesel fuel by the entire Snohomish County fleet would reduce emissions by about 60 US tons per year.

When the new maintenance facility at Cathcart opens circa 2008, the County intends to use a mix of ultra low sulfur diesel and B20 in its own fuel tanks as well as at all fueling locations.

Snohomish County is also pursuing an Ecology grant for installing diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) on older county equipment in 2006. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency estimates an additional 157 US tons per year reduction in emissions from that action.

“Biodiesel fuel offers the potential to open up new opportunities for local farmers and businesses.” says Reardon.

###