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### **Hearings Board Questions Jefferson County About Title 8 Shooting Ordinance**

The State Growth Management Hearings Board traveled to Port Townsend today to hear an appeal of Jefferson County's recent ordinance regulating commercial shooting ranges. Interest in the issue is high and it was standing room only for much of the proceedings.

The Tarboo Ridge Coalition has challenged the ordinance asserting that it opens up valuable and productive forest land to conversion in violation of the Growth Management Act. In addition, the Coalition claims that the County sidestepped requirements for public comment on the issue by failing to involve the Planning Commission and conduct a State Environmental Policy review.

The County previously cited unidentified impediments that prevented them from taking time to consider the environmental impacts of the ordinance. At other times they have claimed they are not required to consider the impacts.

TRC maintains the County's actions will cause significant adverse environmental impacts and that the new ordinance is a major change to the land use code. The new ordinance opens up 76% of the land in unincorporated Jefferson County for unlimited sized, private for profit, commercial shooting facilities. In contrast, the old code allowed shooting ranges only for recreational and tourist use.

"We are especially concerned the new law allows large-scale military training at private facilities," said Scott Freeman, the incoming President of the TRC Board. "This is not the Jefferson County envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan."

Phil Hunsucker, Jefferson County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney defended the County before the hearings board. Alex Sidles of Bricklin and Newman, LLP, a Seattle-based environment and land use firm, represented the Tarboo Ridge Coalition.

During the 3-hour proceedings the Hearings Board asked penetrating questions about each of the issues and committed to issuing their ruling by July 17.

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