**Chapter 610 Investigation of Soils, Rock, and Surfacing Materials**

**610.04 Geotechnical Investigation, Design, and Reporting**

**610.04(5) Well Decommissioning**

In accordance with RCW 18.104.020 and WAC 173-160-111, a well is defined as a water well, resource protection well, dewatering well, and geotechnical soil boring. Specifically, RCW 18.104.020(8) defines *"geotechnical soil boring" or "boring"* as *“a well drilled for the purpose of obtaining soil samples or information to ascertain structural properties of the subsurface.”*

Wells may be installed as part of the project design for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to monitoring groundwater and performing downhole testing after drilling within the cased hole. A more detailed definition of a well and all applicable WACs and RCWs related to this subject are summarized in Chapter 3 of the Geotechnical Design Manual (GDM). All wells are assigned a unique well tag ID that is unique to that well throughout the life cycle from the time of installation during drilling until decommissioning when the well is no longer needed.

The region project office and the geotechnical office should work together to ensure that the decommissioning of all wells within the limits of a project and within WSDOT right of way occurs in accordance with Department of Ecology regulations prior to construction. This includes wells completed by WSDOT HQ Geotechnical crews, Region drill crews, consultant drillers under subcontract to WSDOT (both directly and through GECs), and wells installed by outside agencies within WSDOT right of way. The HQ Geotechnical Office is responsible for maintaining a database of all active wells within WSDOT right-of way, including those done by outside agency or by drilling contractors under subcontract.

All wells, including those installed by outside agencies or consultants, should be clearly identified in the PS&E plans (see Plans Preparation Manual). The timing of decommission can vary depending on the purpose of the well installation, but in general all wells should be decommissioned prior to contract award unless there is an unusual circumstance that would make it beneficial to continue monitoring from a safety standpoint or other reason during construction. If this is the case, then this must be discussed at the first general pre-construction meeting for the project with the contractor so that they fully understand the importance of leaving the wells undisturbed until they are properly decommissioned.

Decommissioning of wells for design build projects shall be done in accordance with the requirements in Section 2.6 of the RFP (see Design Build Manual). All wells installed as part of the development of the Geotechnical Data Report for the project should be decommissioned prior to contract advertisement.