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Sent: Monday, January 6, 2025 at 04:20:19 PM PST

Subject: Call to open 925 N. Forest St. shelter for two weeks starting Jan. 15

Dear Whatcom County Council, Executive Sidhu, and
Whatcom County Health and Community Services:

I am writing to support the community need expressed at the recent meeting of homeless outreach service providers, along with others, regarding the upcoming sweep of the Bakerview encampment. The need was for Whatcom County's Severe Weather Shelter to be opened during the two weeks related to the intensive efforts for clearing the property of folks without shelter.

Hopefully, this is an action you have all been anticipating taking and are preparing this availability already.

I checked past weather reports for January, February, and March of the years beginning with the brutally cold winter of 2019.

According to the National Weather Service's Bellingham International Airport data, that year of 2019, when the

County opened their shelter in the Garden Room, had the most dates of temperature lows below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, at right around 50.

The other years between then and now ranged from 28 dates with lows below 32 degrees to 37 dates.

It seems this information, paired with the shelter seeming to only have been opened for 2 nights so far, seems to offer a low risk of needing to go over the 50 nights of opening the County has already anticipated as a ceiling for operating this hostile weather season.

Of course, there is an urgent need for County sheltering to be dependably available every night through the end of March to which I still call on you to respond.

But I am hoping you can imminently assure outreach workers and those people soon to be displaced from their spots to live and sleep, that the extra resource of the shelter on Forest St. will be available on a reliable basis for the two weeks for which the request is being made.

Sincerely,
Dena Jensen
Birch Bay, WA