



OCT 31 2008

Re: Spokane River Water Quality Modeling for the TMDL and NPDES Processes

Dear Sir or Madam:

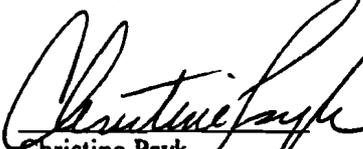
This is in response to your October 8, 2008, letter raising concerns about the Spokane River water quality model and requesting that the agencies convene a stakeholder modeling group to address these concerns. As we noted at the recent public meeting, we recognize the deep concern of the stakeholders in the basin over the current uncertainties in the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) processes. We hope this response eases some of that concern.

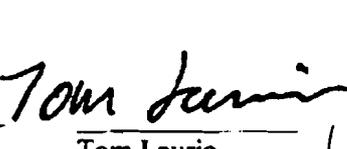
Our first task since the September 26, 2008, meeting in Spokane has been to reestablish the interagency working groups for this project. We have organized a technical workgroup with representatives from EPA, Washington Department of Ecology, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Spokane Tribe. The technical workgroup is working with policy staff to ensure that the TMDL and NPDES permits can be completed in a coordinated fashion to meet the downstream state water quality standard.

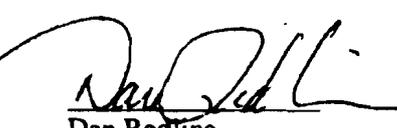
We believe we have a well performing model and that it is not necessary to convene a Stakeholder Modeling Work Group at this time. We agree with you that the water quality modeling plays a central role in the outcome of the TMDL and NPDES processes. We also agree that there are important policy choices embedded in the model runs to support agency decisions, and we recognize that everyone has an interest in understanding these decisions and providing input to the process. Toward that end, we will convene a half-day meeting of all interested stakeholders in early December to present our timeline and our general thinking about potential paths forward. The agenda will include both policy and technical issues, including modeling issues. Our goal is to create an open and inclusive discussion about the modeling and policy options, so we will convene additional meetings to discuss the specific modeling scenarios that we are considering (January, 2009) and to discuss the results of the modeling (May, 2009).

As you know, our agencies meet and confer with individual stakeholders on an on-going basis. We will continue these efforts to be responsive to stakeholder concerns and keep you up-to-date on TMDL activities and issues. In addition, the Department of Ecology is working with the Spokane River Forum to post TMDL information on the Forum's website. The work plan, meeting announcements, agendas and technical reports will be posted as they become available and Ecology will notify all stakeholders when documents are posted. The work plan will be posted by November 10th. Thank you for your continued interest in a collaborative approach to achieving water quality standards and protecting the health of our shared Spokane River watershed.

Sincerely,


Christine Psyk,
Office of Water & Watersheds


Tom Laurie,
Ecology


Dan Redline,
Idaho DEQ

Addressees:

Mr. Dale Arnold, City of Spokane Wastewater Management

Mr. N. Bruce Rawls, Spokane County Division of Utilities

Mr. H. Sid Fredrickson, City of Coeur d'Alene

Mr. Jay Townsend, Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board

The Honorable Clay Larkin, Mayor of city of Post Falls

Mr. Tom Agnew, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District

Mr. Bruce Howard, Avista Corporation

Mr. Wayne Andresen, Pres., & General Manager
Inland Empire Paper Company

Mr. Bernard P. (Bud) Leber, Jr., Environmental Engineering Manager
Kaiser Aluminum - Trentwood Works

cc: Rick Eichstaedt, Center for Justice

Bonne Beavers, Center for Justice

Ron Lavigne, Washington Attorney General's Office

Brian Crossley, Spokane Tribe of Indians