



# **RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY**

**CORNWALL AVENUE LANDFILL  
Bellingham, Washington**

***AGREED ORDER DOCUMENTS***

**November, 2004**

**ISSUED BY:**

**WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY**

**TOXICS CLEANUP PROGRAM**

## **Introduction**

On September 28, 2004 the draft agreed order documents (draft agreed order, draft public participation plan) for the Cornwall Avenue Landfill site in Bellingham were issued for a 30 day-public comment period. Public involvement activities related to this public comment period included:

- Distribution of a fact sheet describing the site and the documents through a mailing to over 450 people, including neighboring businesses and other interested parties;
- Publication of a paid display ad in *The Bellingham Herald*, dated September 26, 2004;
- Publication of notice in the Washington State Site Register, dated September 28, 2004;
- Posting of the documents on the Ecology web site; and
- Providing copies of the documents through information repositories at Ecology's Bellingham Field Office and Northwest Regional Office, and the Bellingham Public Library – Downtown Branch.

One comment letter was received regarding the draft agreed order documents. Mr. Rick Black's comment letter is summarized below along with Ecology's response to the comment. A copy of the comment letter is attached.

## **Background**

The Cornwall Avenue Landfill site (Site) is approximately eight-acres in size and is located at the south end of Cornwall Avenue (see figure on page 3). The Site is bounded by Bellingham Bay on the south and west, the R.G. Haley International Corporation, Inc. site on the north (a former wood treatment facility), and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks on the east. The Site is currently owned by Georgia Pacific West (GP) and the state of Washington. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the state-owned portion of the land, which is located adjacent to Bellingham Bay and leased to GP. The inner harbor line represents the boundary between state-owned land and GP-owned land.

Most of the Site was originally tide flats and sub-tidal areas of Bellingham Bay. From 1888 to 1946, the Site was used for sawmill operations, including log storage and wood waste disposal. From 1946 to 1965, the Port held the lease on the state-owned land, subleasing the property to the City from 1953 to 1962. The City used the Site for municipal waste disposal. In 1962, the City entered into a lease with another Port tenant (American Fabricators) who continued waste disposal operations at the Site until 1965.

Landfill operations ended at the Site in 1965, and a soil layer was placed on top of the municipal waste. Rock boulders and broken concrete were later placed on the shoreline to prevent erosion. Despite this informal slope protection, significant shoreline erosion has occurred resulting in the

exposure of landfill materials. The beach area is now largely composed of exposed and reworked landfill material, and the toe of the municipal waste fill slope extends out into Bellingham Bay some distance beyond the shoreline

Previous environmental investigations of the Site indicate the presence of hazardous substances in groundwater, surface water, soil and/or sediments above state cleanup standards including arsenic, copper, lead, mercury, silver, zinc, cyanide, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) compounds and fecal coliform. As a result, the Site is subject to the investigation and cleanup requirements of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) and Sediment Management Standards, administered by Ecology.

The Cornwall Avenue Landfill site is one of several cleanup sites identified in the Bellingham Bay Comprehensive Strategy, a bay-wide guidance document issued in 2000. The Comprehensive Strategy integrates sediment cleanup, control of pollution sources, habitat restoration and aquatic/shoreline land use on a bay-wide scale.

The draft agreed order requires the Port and City to complete a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS). This study will summarize existing environmental conditions at the Site, present and evaluate a range of cleanup alternatives, and identify a preferred cleanup approach. It will build on previous site investigations and will provide the information necessary for Ecology to select a preferred alternative for site cleanup. The RI/FS will detail:

- Results of previous investigations.
- The nature and extent of contamination for soil, sediment, groundwater and surface water.
- Other important Site information relevant to Site cleanup.
- Multiple alternatives for cleanup of the Site, including evaluation of those alternatives against MTCA criteria including effectiveness, implementability, and cost-effectiveness.
- Definition of a preferred alternative.

The RI/FS will be issued for public review and comment in 2005.

## **Comment Received and Ecology Response**

**Mr. Black Comment Summary:** Remediate the site in a manner facilitating public use.

**Response:** *Cleanup actions at this site will achieve cleanup standards protective of human health and the environment in accordance with Washington state's hazardous waste cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (chapter 70.105D RCW). Conversion of this area to open space/public use is a zoning and property owner issue. As owners of property at the site, DNR*

*and GP could pursue this course of action as long as measures are taken to continue the protection of human health and the environment.*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**