

April 2009 PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

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Summary

Ecology received three formal comments during the February 2—March 20, 2009 State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Early Scoping public comment period. Ecology requested public input on potential environmental impacts of the proposed Interim Cleanup Action Plan for the Tacoma Smelter Plume (TSP) site. This document describes the next steps in the SEPA and public review process, and lists the three comments received.

What Happens Next?

The draft ICAP will go out for public review and comment under the Model Toxics Control Act. At that time, Ecology must make a determination whether the project is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts. There are three possible outcomes, or “determinations”:

- If impacts are significant, Ecology must develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS looks at possible environmental impacts and describes how to mitigate (lessen) them.
- If impacts are not significant, Ecology may issue a Determination of Non Significance (DNS).
- If there are few environmental impacts and they can be mitigated, Ecology may issue a Mitigated Determination of Non Significance (MDNS) and make changes to the cleanup plans.

Ecology expects the draft ICAP and SEPA determination to be issued for public review and comment in late 2009 or early 2010.

Contact Information

For further information about the Interim Cleanup Action Plan, please contact Hannah Aoyagi, Public Involvement Coordinator at 360.407.6790 or by e-mail at haoy461@ecy.wa.gov.

Public Comments

Comment 1: Stephanie Jewett, City of Burien

I understand that the Tacoma Smelter Interim Cleanup Action Plan will include ways to encourage government planning offices to require property soil sampling and cleanup at the time of new development/redevelopment. With this as a potential recommendation of the ICAP, the SEPA review should look at possible impacts to landslide hazard areas (such as stability and potential for erosion). Landslide Hazard Areas, as defined in our Critical Area regulations, are located along the Puget Sound waterfront in our jurisdiction and this same area appears to have been affected by the smelter plume as shown in Figure 1 of the early Scoping notice.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please feel free to contact me if you need any clarification on the above comment,

Stephanie Jewett, AICP
Planner, City of Burien

Comment 2: Alexander Callender, Washington State Department of Ecology

The Puget Sound basin is used extensively for aquaculture. As a matter of public health, marine sediments and shellfish should be sampled according to the TSP model to determine if shellfish uptake of the smelter plume toxins is occurring in known aquaculture areas.

Alex Callender
Wetland/Shoreland Specialist for Thurston and Pierce Counties
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program
WA Department of Ecology

Comment 3: William Brant

I live in Normandy Park, WA which had been in the Tacoma Smelter Plume. Some time ago a measurement from the nearby Nature Trails Park had a reading for arsenic which was much higher than the levels indicated in the footprint map on page three of the interim plan. This may have been because this is a wetland that drains the upper levels of Normandy Park and perhaps concentrates the finding. I know that many people collect blackberries from this area. Many of us who live nearby have never had our property tested for plume contaminants to our knowledge. I would suggest that the State should retest these areas and also sample sufficient private properties in Normandy Park to establish the level of contaminants remaining in the soil in both mixed soils and undisturbed soils. The following activities could then be addressed: Children playing in school yards with little ground cover, playing on ground covered with an established lawn, and gardening and food growing in mixed soils. The final report should also address whether food grown in local soils are safe and what precautions will make it safe. If arsenic is not taken up in food grown locally, how well does washing act to remove contaminants. You indicate the State is not prepared to clean up the plume, even where it appears to be at action levels, so at least provide sufficient education about the plume areas and what actions can make our local activities safer.

Thank You,
Wm Clarke Brant