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*Via U.S. Mail & Email*

**RE: Commercial Fishing Industry Comments on Proposed Human Health  
Criteria Water Quality Standards & Implementation Tools Rulemaking**

Dear Honorable Governor Inslee, Washington Department of Ecology, and U.S. EPA:

As commercial fishermen, our livelihoods depend on abundant, safe-to-consume fish and shellfish. Studies across Washington State show serious problems with toxic pollution accumulating in fish and shellfish that people regularly eat. The large number of fish advisories for dangerous pollutants like PCBs, DDT, mercury and lead—advising people to limit or stop eating certain kinds of fish—reflects the severity of the problem. But people do not follow fish advisories. Moreover, fish advisories harm our industry. Telling people not to eat otherwise healthy fish and shellfish is not the answer.

Washington must take bold action to deal with the serious problem of toxic pollution. Yet Washington's proposed rules ignore the best interests of people across Washington and the Pacific Northwest, including commercial fishermen and people that rely on the commercial fishing industry, who depend on toxic-free fish and shellfish. As people that both regularly eat

fish and depend on safe fish for our livelihoods, we ask Washington and EPA to move swiftly to adopt accurate, protective water quality standards. This requires significant changes to Washington's proposed rules.

Specifically, we urge Governor Inslee and the Washington Department of Ecology to revise the proposed water quality standards rules to: (1) protect public health, and (2) eliminate loopholes that will make it easier for polluters to discharge toxic pollution. As drafted, increasing the cancer risk rate in Washington sends the wrong message to fish consumers and people that buy Washington-caught fish for the restaurant and commercial food industries. Instead of tackling the serious problem of toxic pollution, the rules give polluting industries new opportunities to discharge more toxic pollution. This is completely unacceptable.

We also urge EPA to step in and reject Washington's rules if the state fails to make significant improvements to protect public health. While EPA has repeatedly communicated its disapproval of the inadequate standards to Washington, Washington has not moved to more protective standards. Endless cycles of delay must stop. EPA has a duty to protect people and the industries that depend on safe fish and shellfish from unsafe levels of toxins.

The fishing and shellfishing industries are critical parts of Washington's economy. But Washington's proposed rules fail to value the importance of reducing toxic pollution to protect our livelihoods. We ask that Washington and EPA consider the significant ramifications of toxic pollution and deal with the problem head on. Thank you for considering our input on this important rulemaking.

Sincerely,

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