

March 4, 2015

WATER QUALITY PROGRAM  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

MAR -6 2015

Cheryl Niemi  
Washington State Department of Ecology  
Water Quality Program  
P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600



4201 Roosevelt Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98105

Dear Ms. Niemi,

On behalf of PCC Natural Markets, I'm writing to express my concern over the new water quality standards proposed for Washington state. A tenfold increase in cancer risk (and the additional increase in allowable risk from PCBs) is not acceptable.

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pccnaturalmarkets.com

PCC is a local Washington business that represents nearly 60,000 member-owners in the Seattle area had more than 7 million individual sales last year. We place high value on providing fresh, local and organic food. We work hard to provide the best quality, and this often includes locally caught seafood. Our ability to offer fish and shellfish harvested from Washington waters depends on knowing those foods are safe to eat. Without improved water quality standards, our business and the local fishermen we support will be impacted.

Washington's maritime industry is a crucial part of our economy, generating \$30 billion in revenue each year and about 148,000 jobs. Fishing and seafood processing account for nearly 60 percent of that revenue, according to a 2013 report supported by the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Economic Development Council of Seattle. PCC sold more than 300,000 pounds — totaling \$4.4 million in sales — of seafood last year, including Washington shellfish and groundfish.

I know you face pushback from big businesses against tighter standards that would force them to improve stormwater and wastewater treatment, but this draft plan would place zero burden on polluters and all of the burden on local commercial and recreational fishermen, their customers, and fish consumers. This cannot be considered progress. And while the toxics package proposed in conjunction with the new standards is a step in the right direction, it is not a substitute for robust regulatory standards that provide for improved water treatment and cleanup of existing pollutants.

The only appropriate action at this time is to establish stronger water quality standards that truly are protective of human health, as the state of Oregon has done already. Clean water is vitally important to the health of our communities and a sustainable local economy. We have long had among the weakest standards in the nation, and now is the time for positive change.

Sincerely,

  
Eli Penberthy  
Editor, Sound Consumer  
PCC Public Affairs



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and operated

