

From: North, Teri (ECY) [<mailto:teno461@ECY.WA.GOV>] **On Behalf Of** Sturdevant, Ted (ECY)
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2012 5:17 PM
Subject: Invitation to Toxics Conversation

I am writing to ask for your help in finding new solutions to the problem of toxic pollution and exposures in the State of Washington. Reducing toxic threats has been one of my top priorities as Director of the Department of Ecology, and while we have made significant progress in recent years, significant challenges remain. On one hand, far too many toxic releases and exposures still occur – many of which are avoidable. Incentives to design pollution out of our manufacturing and industrial processes are often weak or non-existent, the regulatory process fails to address significant sources of concern, and federal law underpinning toxic chemicals management is outdated and deficient. As a result, we at the state level are forced to make the most of a broken system.

On the other hand, relying solely on existing regulatory tools can sometimes result in requiring dischargers to take costly actions that take an economic toll without providing meaningful environmental or human health benefit. Laws like the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act have enabled great progress and real protections over time, but relying on statutes designed for single, “point-source” pollution to fix problems from diffuse, “non-point” sources has inherent limits.

Our quality of life in Washington depends on a healthy environment and a robust economy – each of us, regardless of perspective, depends on and deserves both. Our current regime for addressing toxic pollution fails us on both counts. As such, I believe we have an opportunity and a responsibility to take a comprehensive look at our approach, and ask ourselves how we can do better. The current landscape has been defined by regulatory, political and public expectations and limitations that can make new approaches difficult. But I am convinced that if we step back, transcend our legal and political silos, and look for creative new approaches that offer better environmental and economic outcomes, we can find them.

As someone with a valuable perspective to bring to this important endeavor, I ask you to engage with me and others to take a fresh look at the challenges before us and identify new opportunities to address those challenges. I will support this process with research and analytic resources, facilitation support from Ross Strategic, and my own personal time and commitment. My hope is that at the end of this effort, we will have identified promising new ideas to inform our approach to toxics reduction, and have a set of specific next steps to further develop those ideas.

Specifically, I am asking you to join me to:

- Examine existing approaches to identify and control human and environmental exposures to toxic chemicals.
- Identify areas where current approaches fall short.
- Identify areas where current rules and programs addressing toxic threats can be improved.

- Envision new approaches to reducing toxic pollution and exposures that offer improved environmental and human health protections, and make sense economically.

I anticipate monthly, half-day meetings between now and January, 2013, and individual and small group work between meetings to accomplish this work. We are hoping to schedule the first meeting on September 19 or September 28. Staff from Ross Strategic will be contacting you very soon to firm up the date, time and location for our first meeting.

As I wrote in my open letter on fish consumption and sediment management standards earlier this summer, I believe it is time to ask whether we can devise new approaches for Washington State that work for our environment, public health and economy by achieving better, faster reductions in toxic pollution while avoiding what I call high-cost/low-value measures. I very much hope you will join me.

Ross Strategic will follow up on this invitation. Meanwhile, if you have questions or a response in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Carol Kraege, Reducing Toxic Threats Section Manager, at ckra461@ecy.wa.gov or (360) 407-6906.

Thank you in advance for your participation and support.

Sincerely,

Ted Sturdevant
Director