

The Willamette River Insider

November 2016, Issue 5



Welcome to the latest edition of *The Willamette River Insider*, a publication by the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (PHCAG). We are volunteers providing oversight of the lower Willamette River Superfund cleanup, the 10 miles from the Broadway Bridge to the confluence with the Columbia River, adjacent to north, northeast and northwest Portland. See PortlandHarborCAG.info for more information.

Chair's Corner: Public Comment Period Over, Next Steps

by Jim Robison, chair



Jim Robison, chair, PHCAG

The Public Comment Period is over, and the EPA will have no interaction with the public while they review and respond to all the comments submitted. Thousands of individuals and many community organizations submitted comments requesting EPA develop a more aggressive cleanup plan. On the PHCAG website at portlandharborcag.info/node/455, we have posted comments from community organizations, individuals, the Yakama Nation, as well as the City of Portland and Oregon State.

There is tremendous pressure on EPA to complete the Record of Decision before the end of 2016, however, the history of other Superfund sites across the country indicates that the process normally takes at least 18 months. During that time, the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group will continue to meet on second Wednesdays, broaden our education on next steps in the Superfund and see how we can support a cleanup that is as effective as possible. All are welcome!

Port of Portland Reverses Position on Proposed Toxic Waste Dump at T4

From an email sent by Brooke Berglund of Port of Portland on August 17, 2016:

“The Port has taken a hard look at a Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) as a viable solution for the harbor. While we believe that a T4 CDF would be engineered to be protective and would be constructed safely, sponsoring a CDF at Terminal 4 is not the right decision for the Port. The Port is not interested in taking on long-term management of a facility that the Port’s neighbors adamantly oppose. The Port has also considered the economic risks and uncertainties with the CDF and has concluded that it may not be a good use of Port resources, especially as the Port is facing significant constraints on its general fund. The Port wants to find a protective, cost-effective solution in the Portland Harbor, and to be a good neighbor. Considering the cost uncertainty and the community’s opposition, we have concluded that a T4 CDF is not that solution.”



T-4, Slip 1
14-acre site of proposed toxic waste dump

EPA Announcement, September 23, 2016

Greetings, everyone!

The 90-day EPA public comment period on the Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site closed on September 6, 2016.

Approximately 5,300 commenters submitted comments via emails, hard copies, web submittals and oral testimonies at four EPA public meetings.

EPA will select the final cleanup after reviewing and considering the comments. A summary of responses to these comments will be published with the final cleanup plan (also called the Record of Decision). Thank you!

Consultant Calls on EPA to Incorporate Latest Research on Airborne PCBs

During the Public Comment period, community consultant Peter deFur called on the EPA to update its human health risk assessment with new research that indicates PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) can go airborne from water, travel on air currents and harm humans up to 5 miles away. PCBs, a known carcinogen and endocrine disrupter, are considered the most toxic chemical in the lower Willamette River.



Dr. Peter deFur, President Environmental Stewardship Concepts

The Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group in its formal comments has also asked EPA to better assess the risk from PCBs going airborne.

The research came forward in two studies in 2006 and 2015 by Dr. David Carpenter MD, a public health physician and Director of the Institute for Health and the Environment at the University of Albany in New York. The 2006 study focuses on various routes of PCB exposure while the 2015 study describes how PCBs can enter the air from water and sediments. It also examines their release from dump sites, a phenomena that varies according to how tightly the sites are covered. Both studies can be found on the PHCAG website at PortlandHarborCAG.info.

Willamette River Festival 2016



Salmon windsock procession

Afro-Kidworks dancers



Partner with PHCAG by Donating



The Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group are volunteers whose mission is to advocate for the public interest in the Superfund and help inform the community. We are a 501c3 non-profit organization through our fiscal sponsor, St. Johns Center for Opportunity.

Please consider supporting our mission with a donation to help ensure an inclusive cleanup process. See the donate button at PortlandHarborCAG.info.

Fall / Winter Calendar

Nov. 5-26, every Sat, 10-12pm - Willamette Speaks Writing Workshop in November at Pigeons Studio, 7325 N. Alta. Participants will visit various sites to write, reflect and share.

Nov. 8, 6-8pm - PHCAG General meeting. 6543 N. Burlington. All are welcome.

Nov. 22, 6-8pm - PHCAG Steering meeting, 6543 N. Burlington. Open to the public.

Dec. 14, 6-8pm - PHCAG General meeting. 6543 N. Burlington. All are welcome.

Dec. 28, 6-8pm - PHCAG Steering meeting, 6543 N. Burlington. Open to the public.

Dec. 31 - EPA's goal for completed Record of Decision describing the final remedy for the cleanup.

PHCAG is seeking new members.
For more, email: PortlandHarborCAG@gmail.com

June 9, 2016

EPA presents the Proposed Plan Followed by

90 days of Formal Public Comment June 9- Sept. 6



Dec 2016 or 2017

Anticipated date of the Record of Decision that will describe final remedy

2017 - 2018

Remedial Design phase with more detailed planning

Public Notification & Involvement