

Alcoa - Intalco Aluminum Corporation

Beach I, Beach II and Construction Debris Landfills Site



Agreed Order for Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study

The Department of Ecology, under authority of the Model Toxics Control Act (Chapter 70.105D RCW), proposes to enter into an Agreed Order with Intalco Aluminum Company of Ferndale. The Agreed Order would require Intalco to investigate soil, surface water, and groundwater contamination found at three closed landfills on the plant site, and to develop a plan to clean up the contamination.

What is an Agreed Order?

The proposed Agreed Order is a legal document, signed by both parties, formalizing a performance agreement between Intalco Aluminum and the Department of Ecology. This Order will require that Intalco research and identify the environmental impacts resulting from past waste disposal practices (called a *remedial investigation*); and that Intalco report on a range of available treatment or control methods that will protect humans and the environment from exposure to the closed landfills' contamination (called a *feasibility study*).

Site Background

The Intalco Aluminum smelting facility is located at 4050 Mountain View Road, at Ferndale, WA. The three inactive landfills— Beach I, Beach II and the Construction Debris landfill—are located west of the smelter, on the bluff overlooking the Strait of Georgia. There is no direct public access to this property.

Bechtel, Inc. disposed construction debris in the landfills during the 1960's, while building the aluminum plant. Intalco continued disposing waste in the three landfills on the bluff, from 1966 through 1984. Intalco stopped using these landfills in 1984 (before state law established

landfill liner requirements) and closed them by placing a soil cover over the debris.

Current Waste Disposal

Intalco constructed a new landfill complex east of the closed site, in 1986. It consists of a double-lined solid waste cell, a triple-lined dangerous waste cell, and a construction debris cell. Solid waste from the plant goes into the double-lined cell. The triple-lined dangerous waste cell contains sludge (from a water treatment plant) and spent potliner. The construction debris cell occupies approximately three acres. Waste disposed in that cell includes wood debris, wire, pipe, asphalt debris, concrete debris, and other construction/demolition related material. Groundwater from beneath all of the cells is monitored using wells in the landfill monitoring network.

Closed Landfills Contaminated

Seeps located in the hillside below the closed landfills have been monitored since 1985. Water from these seeps originates in those unlined landfills. Monitoring results show that the water has elevated levels— compared with concentrations found in a background monitoring well—of fluoride, cyanide, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) and total suspended solids. Concentrations of fluoride are above limits allowed by the federal drinking water standard. Levels of cyanide and PCB's are over the state clean up law standards that require action. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's) have also been found in soil samples taken from the Beach I and Beach II landfills.

During the 1990's, minor landslides on the bluff near the closed landfills exposed waste material from the site. Some of the landfill debris fell onto the beach and into the intertidal zone. Intalco's independent site investigation confirmed the presence of contaminated groundwater, along with the

April 2001

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

April 23 to May 22, 2001

PUBLIC MEETING

Ferndale Senior Center
(Located in Pioneer Park)
1998 Cherry Street
Ferndale, WA

7:00 p.m., May 3, 2001

SEND WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT AGREED ORDER TO:

Paul Skyllingstad
Department of Ecology
PO Box 47706
Olympia, WA 98504-7706
(360) 407-6949

E-mail: psky461@ecy.wa.gov

INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Copies of the proposed Agreed Order are available for public examination at the following locations:

Industrial Section
Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Drive
Lacey, WA
(360) 407-6949

Department of Ecology
Bellingham Field Office
1204 Railroad, Suite 200
Bellingham, WA 98225

Ferndale Public Library
2222 Main Street
Ferndale, WA 98249

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exposed construction debris and plant waste. Intalco removed landfill debris from the lower bluff slope and beach. In December 1999, Intalco accurately surveyed the three closed landfills. In 2000, Intalco presented the initial 1999 fieldwork results to Ecology and offered its plan to conduct a remedial investigation and feasibility study to start the clean up of all three of the landfills.

What Is Being Done?

Intalco started collecting data to identify the nature, extent, and volume of material in the landfills. In July 2000, Intalco reported its investigative activities completed to date. Intalco has dug several test pits to determine the nature of the waste, and has collected soil, surface water, and seep samples from an area located below the landfills (on the beach at the base of the cliff.)

The proposed Agreed Order will require Intalco to continue the sample collecting and analysis, in order to accurately describe the volume and type of material found in each closed landfill. It will also require Intalco to characterize the groundwater found below each of those three landfills. This data will be used in the feasibility study as the basis for evaluating which of the different cleanup alternatives are most appropriate for the site.

Ecology Wants Your Comments!

You are invited to examine and comment on the proposed Agreed Order through May 22, 2001. The public comment period presents an opportunity to have your ideas and comments heard by Ecology. The box on page one provides details on where the documents can be found and how to submit comments. For access to more detailed documents than those found in the listed information repositories, call Paul Skillingstad at Ecology (360) 407-6949.

A public meeting is scheduled at the Ferndale Senior Center, located in Pioneer Park, at 6:30 p.m., May 3, 2001. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the site and about the proposed Agreed Order for a remedial investigation and feasibility study, and to voice your concerns about specific terms of the Order. Please share this information with any individuals or groups you think should be informed about the site.

Please send your written comments by May 22, 2001, to Paul Skillingstad at the Ecology address listed on page one.

Ecology will consider and respond to all written comments received during the public comment period—and Ecology will revise the Agreed Order, if necessary. Updates of site activities will be provided to those who submit comments or who ask to be placed on the site mailing list.

What Happens Next?

Ecology will consider each formal public comment on the proposed Agreed Order—and the Order will be modified, if necessary, based on those comments. Fieldwork required by the Order will be started this spring and finished this summer. The feasibility study required by the Order should be completed in approximately nine months from the date Ecology issues the Agreed Order.

Ecology's next step in the project will be to select a preferred cleanup action plan and draft a Consent Decree and Cleanup Action Plan. The Consent Decree and Cleanup Action Plan formalize the cleanup selection and sets the schedule for Intalco to complete the cleanup.