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# I&J Waterway Site Bellingham



## Legal Agreement Amendment Available for Public Review

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the Port of Bellingham (Port) are proposing to amend an existing legal agreement (called an *agreed order*) which requires the Port to conduct an environmental study (called a *remedial investigation/feasibility study or RI/FS*) for the I&J Waterway site (Site) in Bellingham, Washington. The proposed agreed order amendment allows Ecology and the Port to make minor changes in the schedule of work by written agreement. The amendment also incorporates **Project Plans** into the agreed order. The Project Plans include several documents which will guide the activities to be performed during the environmental investigation of the Site.

## Comments Encouraged!

**The proposed agreed order amendment is currently available for public review and comment.** Your comments on this proposed document are welcome through **October 7, 2005**. The box at the right contains information on where to view the documents and how to submit written comments. Ecology will respond in writing to all comments received and may make changes to the documents as a result of them. If these changes are significant, the revised agreed order amendment will once again be made available for public review and comment.

## Site Background

The Site is located between Hilton Avenue and Bellwether Way on the Bellingham waterfront (see map on page 3). The Site consists of contaminated marine sediments located within the I&J Waterway and the nearby ship berthing areas. The Port owns the berth areas on the south side of the waterway and the surrounding uplands, and the state of Washington owns the aquatic lands within the I&J Waterway. A federal navigation channel is located within the I&J Waterway which was authorized in 1965 and constructed in 1966.

Between the early 1900's and 1940, Whatcom Falls Mill Company owned the upland and berth areas and operated a lumber mill in that location. In 1944, the Port acquired ownership of the upland and berth areas and began leasing the property to a variety of industrial tenants. Bayshore Lumber operated a lumber mill at the head of the waterway from 1947 to 1962, and H&H Products managed the same mill from 1963 to 1972. From 1963 to 1992, Olivine Corporation operated a rock crushing plant for the mineral olivine. North Pacific Frozen Products managed a frozen foods processing plant between 1946 and 1959, and Bornstein Seafoods has operated a seafood processing facility between

## September 2005

**Public Comment Period:  
9/7/05-10/7/05**

**Technical questions, written comments, or to be added to the site mailing list:**

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**Documents can be reviewed at the following locations:**

Department of Ecology  
Bellingham Field Office  
1204 Railroad Avenue, Ste 200  
(360) 738-6250

Bellingham Public Library  
210 Central Avenue, Bellingham  
(360) 676-6860

Department of Ecology  
Northwest Regional Office  
3190 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98008  
(425) 649-7190

Ecology's Website:  
[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/blhm\\_bay/sites/bel\\_bay\\_sites.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/blhm_bay/sites/bel_bay_sites.html)

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1959 and the present. The Bornstein building was destroyed by a fire in 1985 and rebuilt in the same location.

Previous environmental investigations of the Site indicate the presence of hazardous substances in the surface sediments above state cleanup standards including phthalate compounds, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon compounds, and phenol compounds. Elevated levels of mercury associated with the Whatcom Waterway site and elevated levels of methylphenol compounds associated with on-site or off-site activities are also present in the Site subsurface sediments. As a result, the Site is subject to the investigation and cleanup requirements of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) and Sediment Management Standards (SMS), administered by Ecology.

The I&J Waterway site is one of several cleanup sites being addressed as part of the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot; a bay-wide, multi-agency initiative integrating sediment cleanup, control of pollution sources, habitat restoration and aquatic/shoreline land use.

## Project Plans

The proposed agreed order amendment incorporates Project Plans into the agreed order. The Project Plans include several documents which will guide the activities to be performed during the environmental investigation of the Site including:

- *Sediments RI/FS Work Plan.* This plan describes program objectives, project organization, and project tasks to complete a RI/FS at the Site.
- *Appendix A: Sediment Sampling and Analysis Plan and Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plan.* This plan

summarizes the methods for investigations for surface sediments to be performed during the RI/FS. It also details specific requirements for laboratory and field personnel to verify that the data produced during the environmental investigation are of sufficient quality.

- *Appendix B: PSSDA Sediment Characterization Sampling and Analysis Plan.* This plan provides the scope and methods to investigate subsurface contamination and evaluate the suitability for open-water disposal of sediments at the Site under the Puget Sound Dredged Disposal Analysis Program (PSSDA).

## What's Next?

After the proposed agreed order amendment has been finalized, an RI/FS will be developed which will describe the nature and extent of contamination at the Site, present and evaluate a range of cleanup alternatives, and identify a preferred cleanup approach. The RI/FS will build on previous environmental investigations and will provide the information necessary for Ecology to select a preferred cleanup alternative for the Site. The draft RI/FS is currently scheduled to be released for public review and comment in the summer of 2006.

## How can you be Involved?

Ecology encourages you to stay informed and involved by getting on the Site mailing list (see box on page one for contact information), attending Ecology meetings, reading related documents as they become available, becoming familiar with the cleanup process, and providing feedback through public meetings and comment periods.

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# Location Map of I&J Waterway Site

