



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
for
Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study and Cleanup Action Plan at
J. H. Baxter
6520 – 188th Street NE
Arlington, Washington

J. H. Baxter & Company
1700 South El Camino Real
P. O. Box 5902
San Mateo, CA 94402-0902

Prepared by
Washington State Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, Washington 98008-5452

June 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN	
1.1	Public Participation at Hazardous Waste Sites.....	3
1.2	Goal of the Public Participation Plan	3
1.3	Participants in this Plan	3
2.0	SITE BACKGROUND	
2.1	Location and Description	4
2.2	History.....	4
2.3	Activities and Timeline	5
3.0	COMMUNITY BACKGROUND	
3.1	Community Profile	5
3.2	Community Concerns	5
4.0	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
4.1	Public Involvement Tools	6
	<i>Formal Public Comment Period</i>	
	<i>Public Meetings or Hearings</i>	
	<i>Responsiveness Summaries</i>	
	<i>Information Repositories</i>	
	<i>Site Register</i>	
	<i>Mailing List</i>	
	<i>Fact Sheets</i>	
	<i>Display Ads</i>	
4.2	Plan Updates	8
4.3	Public Points of Contact	8

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

1.1 Public Participation at Hazardous Waste Sites

The Washington State Department of Ecology is committed to providing public participation opportunities during the investigation and cleanup of hazardous waste sites. The Public Participation Plan is intended to promote understanding of Ecology's responsibilities, planning activities, and remedial activities at hazardous waste sites under the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) (Chapter 173-340-WAC), the regulations that guide site cleanup. It also provides an opportunity for Ecology to learn, from the public, information that will enable Ecology to develop a comprehensive cleanup plan that is protective of both human health and the environment.

This Plan outlines the public involvement activities for the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) and Cleanup Action Plan at the J.H. Baxter facility in Arlington, Washington. An RI/FS determines the nature and extent of contamination at the site and evaluates various cleanup options. A Cleanup Action Plan is a detailed outline for the work to be performed during the actual cleanup of the site.

The activities laid out in this plan are aimed at involving the affected community in the investigation and cleanup process in a meaningful way and at facilitating open communication between the community, the agencies involved and the potentially liable persons.

While certain aspects of a Public Participation Plan are prescribed by regulation, this Plan has been tailored to the needs of the public based on the stage and nature of the cleanup, the level of public concern, and the risks posed by the site.

1.2 Goal of the Public Participation Plan

The goal of this plan is to promote public understanding of the planning, investigative, and remedial activities and to provide a channel for the public to comment and assist in the RI/FS process for this site.

The main objectives of this plan are to:

- ◆ Provide information and promote public understanding of the RI/FS process and findings.
- ◆ Invite and encourage interaction and collaboration among representatives of the community, Ecology, and J.H. Baxter and Company.
- ◆ Solicit and respond to community concerns, questions, and comments.
- ◆ Fulfill regulatory requirements of MTCA.

1.3 Participants in this Plan

The potentially liable persons (PLPs) for the J.H. Baxter Arlington facility are J.H. Baxter & Company located at 1700 South El Camino Real, P. O. Box 5902, San Mateo, CA 94402-0902.

This plan was prepared by Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program and was subject to review by J.H. Baxter & Co. Ecology will oversee the investigation (RI/FS) and cleanup and is responsible for public participation.

2.0 SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Description

The facility site is located at 6520 – 188th Street NE within the City of Arlington, Snohomish County, Washington. The facility borders on the south side of 188th Street NE, west of 67th Avenue NE, and east of the Arlington Airport and 59th Drive NE. The area is mainly industrial with a few remaining older homes adjacent to the site. There are new residential developments uphill from the site and across 67th Avenue NE. (See Appendix A for map of the area.)

J.H. Baxter is a privately owned company which produces telephone and power poles using a pressure treating process with pentachlorophenol at their facility. This facility encompasses approximately 52 acres, 17 of which are used for pole treatment operations, 28 for untreated pole storage and pole peeling, and 7 acres of a closed wood waste landfill. The topography of the site is flat. Approximately 90% of the area is unpaved and 10% of the area contains offices and buildings.

Baxter produces primarily 40-to-45 foot utility poles but has the capacity to treat 20-to-130 foot poles. Each year Baxter treats approximately 40,000 poles using 200,000 gallons per year of an organic-based preservative containing approximately 5% PCP.

2.2 History

J.H. Baxter & Company has owned and operated the wood treating facility in Arlington since 1971. The site was previously operated as a pole treatment plant. The plant was built by Butcher, Inc. in the 1960's and operated until 1970. Prior to that time, the land was used for agriculture.

PCP spills occurred at the site in 1981, 1989, and 1990. An adjacent mobile home park was taken off of its domestic supply well and hooked up to city water by J.H. Baxter in 1992. This was done because one of the monitoring wells located at the northwest corner of the site, at the property boundary, had concentrations of PCP.

High levels of dioxins/furans and PCP were found in storm water samples taken in 1998 during two storms. Eight separate storm water samples were collected during the two storms.

Ground water at the site appears to have been impacted by historic wood preserving practices and spills. It is not known whether or not any contaminated ground water has moved beyond the site. The soils beneath the site may be contaminated by current operations and past spills. It is not known how much of the soil is contaminated.

2.3 Current and Future Activities

In June of 1998, the J.H. Baxter facility was designated a high priority cleanup site. In November of 1998, Baxter was notified of its potentially liable persons status and negotiations on an Agreed Order began for the RI/FS and Cleanup Action Plan. An Agreed Order formalizes

an agreement between Ecology and the potentially liable persons for investigation and cleanup actions needed at the site. A thirty day public comment period is currently underway for the proposed Agreed Order.

Ecology is also in the process of renewing a wastewater discharge permit for J.H. Baxter to control the quality of the contaminated stormwater runoff being discharged to the ground. The stormwater is associated with the storage of the treated wood products.

The wastewater discharge permit, called a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, sets effluent limitations on contaminants that may be discharged. In addition, it specifies treatment or other operating conditions necessary to control the quality of the discharge and to ensure compliance with the State Water Quality Standards.

The previous permit required J.H. Baxter to collect and provide analytical data to Ecology on the stormwater runoff. The data will be used to set effluent limitations and conditions in the renewed permit. The renewed draft NPDES permit is also available for public comment during the thirty day comment period and can be found at the repositories listed in this document.

Comments received from the public will be reviewed by Ecology. Modifications may be made based on the comments received if information indicates that the Agreed Order or the NPDES permit is inadequate.

J.H. Baxter & Co. has hired the firms of AGI Technologies and Hart Crowser to develop a work plan and schedule, conduct the RI/FS, and write the Cleanup Action Plan.

When the RI/FS and Cleanup Action Plan is complete, the public will again be invited to comment. The comment period for the RI/FS and Cleanup Action Plan is a key point for the public to give input. Once comments on the RI/FS report and the Cleanup Action Plan are received and reviewed and any necessary changes are made, work on the final cleanup of the site may be completed.

3.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

3.1 Community Profile

Arlington is located forty-five miles north of Seattle and approximately two miles east of Interstate 5 in north Snohomish County. Current population is approximately 7,000. The town developed as a service base for farmers and loggers. Lumber mills have traditionally provided the economic base for Arlington and the railroad through town to Canada was a predominant presence in town during the first half of the century. An industrial area, located on and around Arlington Airport property at the south end of the town, houses a growing number of businesses and industries. The J.H. Baxter facility is located in this industrial area.

The nearest natural water body is Portage Creek, approximately one mile north of the site. The Portage Creek Wildlife Area covers approximately 155 acres in the vicinity of Portage Creek and Cemetery Road.

3.2 Community Concerns

Most of the properties adjacent to the J.H. Baxter facility are commercial or industrial. Airway Mobile Home Park, with 55 homes, is directly northwest of the site. There are some remaining older homes along 67th Avenue NE and north of 188th Street NE. There are new residential developments uphill and across 67th Avenue. These homes are close by but not adjacent to the site.

People living and working near the site were interviewed and surveys were distributed to residents in order to identify the level and types of concerns, whether they were on a well or water system, and whether they wanted to be on the mailing list. (See Appendix B for the actual survey questionnaire.)

Most people were unaware that the J.H. Baxter facility is a hazardous waste site. Upon learning that the site is scheduled for cleanup, the following concerns were expressed:

- ◆ **Ground Water:** Are domestic wells contaminated or potentially threatened by the site? (Concern expressed only by those households on domestic wells.)
- ◆ **Surface Water:** Is human and environmental health threatened by possible surface water contamination?
- ◆ **Air Quality:** Does the strong odor coming from the facility during warm weather carry harmful fumes?

When asked to describe their level of interest or concern about this site, most people responded that they were very concerned. However, this may not be an accurate representation of all community concerns or the level of interest since only a small number of residents were interviewed or returned the survey.

4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to promote public understanding and participation in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) cleanup planned for this Site. This section of the Plan addresses how Ecology will share information and receive public comments and community input on the Site cleanup. Ecology, working with J.H. Baxter Co. retains lead responsibility for these activities.

4.1 Public Involvement Tools

Ecology uses a variety of tools that are aimed at facilitating public participation in the planning and cleanup of a MTCA site. The following is a list of these tools, their purpose and when and how they will be used during this Site cleanup.

Formal Public Comment Period

Comment periods are the primary way Ecology gets feedback from the public on proposed cleanup decisions. Comment periods are at least 30 days long—sometimes longer—and are required at key points during the cleanup process before final decisions are made. During a

comment period, the public can comment in writing, or if ten or more people request one, a public hearing will be held at which oral comments will be taken.

For the J.H. Baxter site, a comment period will be held from June 1, 1999 to June 30, 1999. During this time, the community will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed Agreed Order and this Public Participation Plan, as well as the NPDES permit.

Public Meetings and Hearings

A public meeting or hearing is not required under MTCA for an Agreed Order. However, if ten or more people request one a hearing will be scheduled.

Responsiveness Summaries

After every public comment period, Ecology reviews and responds to all comments received, both oral and written, in a responsiveness summary. Ecology considers changes or revisions based on the input from the public. If significant changes are recommended, then a second comment period is held. If no significant changes are recommended, then the Agreed Order is considered final. A copy of the responsiveness summary is sent to all people who submitted comments, and it is also made available at the Information Repositories listed below with the other pertinent site documents.

Information Repositories

Information repositories are convenient places where you may read and review site information. The information repositories are often at libraries or community sites where the public has access. During the comment period, the site documents will be available for review at each repository. Documents remain at the repositories for the entire duration of the cleanup. Ecology's Central Files can make copies of documents for a fee.

For the J.H. Baxter facility, drafts of the Agreed Order, the NPDES permit, and this Public Participation Plan will be at the following repositories:

Arlington Library	J.H. Baxter Wood Preserving	Department of Ecology
135 N. Washington	6520 188 th Street NE	Northwest Regional Office
Arlington WA 98223	Arlington WA 98223	3190 160th Avenue SE
(360) 435-3033	(360) 435-2146	Bellevue (425) 649-7190

Site information and documents will also be posted on the Ecology web site at [www.wa.gov/ecology/tcp/cleanup.html] under Site Information.

Site Register

One of the communication tools of Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program is the Site Register. All public meetings and comment periods as well as many other activities are published in this bimonthly report. The public comment period for this site will be announced in the Site Register. To receive the Site Register, contact Sherrie Minnick at (360) 407-7200 or email [shan461@ecy.wa.gov].

Mailing List

Ecology has compiled a mailing list for the site. The list includes all residences and businesses adjacent to the site, individuals, groups, public agencies, elected officials, and private businesses and industries that request site-related mailings, as well as other known interested parties. The list will be maintained at Ecology's Northwest Regional Office and will be updated as needed.

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets are site-specific newsletter-like publications that are mailed to interested persons, business and government agencies in and around affected communities. The fact sheet is used to inform them of comment periods and important site activities. Fact sheets are also used to informally update the community on the progress of the site cleanup.

For this site, a fact sheet has been prepared and will be mailed to announce the formal comment period and availability of site documents to be reviewed. Future fact sheets will be prepared to periodically update the community on the progress of the site cleanup.

Display Ads

Display advertisements are placed in the newspaper of largest circulation and local community newspapers to announce the comment period and, if applicable, the public hearing. Display ads are preferred as they are easier to find and easier to understand compared to legal notices.

The display ad for this site to announce the comment period will be placed in The Everett Herald and The Arlington Times.

4.2 Plan Updates

This Public Participation Plan may be updated as the project proceeds. If an update is necessary then the revised plan will be submitted to the public for comment.

4.3 Public Points Of Contact

Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

Ching-Pi Wang
Site Manager
(425) 649-7134
cwan461@ecy.wa.gov

Christine Corrigan
Public Involvement
(425) 649-7254
csun461@ecy.wa.gov