

Weyerhaeuser Longview – Chlor-Alkali Plant Cleanup



Proposed Agreed Order to Implement Cleanup Action Plan

The Department of Ecology, under the authority of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, Chapter 70.105D), has drafted an Agreed Order with the Weyerhaeuser Company (Weyerhaeuser) governing a site clean up. The Agreed Order will formalize the status of an on-going cleanup process of mercury contamination in groundwater and soil at the closed chlor-alkali production facility in the Longview complex.

Your comments on the draft Agreed Order are welcome. Comments may be submitted in writing at any time during the comment period. The box at the right provides information on where to review the draft Agreed Order.

What is an Agreed Order

The proposed Agreed Order is a legal document, signed by both parties that will formalize an agreement between Weyerhaeuser and the Department of Ecology. The agreement will implement a cleanup action plan to address the environmental effects associated with the past production of chlorine and caustic (sodium hydroxide) at the site, and ensure they are contained and mitigated as necessary to protect human health and the environment.

Site Background

In the mid-1950s, the Weyerhaeuser Company began production of chlorine and caustic for its pulp and paper mills. The production technology used elemental mercury. Leaks from pumps, valves, and process lines resulted in mercury releases to onsite soils. In the mid-1970s, this production process was replaced.

This change effectively ended the production-related loss of mercury to the environment. Several removal actions have taken place since then to eliminate the most contaminated soils. However, some of the mercury that was released more than 20 years ago is still detectable in soil and groundwater. Groundwater at the plant, which discharges into the Columbia River, has been monitored for mercury since the 1970s. Based on water and sediment sampling upstream, downstream, and adjacent to the plant, the Columbia River has not been adversely affected. Additional information on the background and history of the Chlor-Alkali Plant can be found in the *Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Work Plan: Chlor-Alkali Plant, Longview, Washington* (CH2M HILL, 1995)(continued on page 2)

February 2004

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

January 28 – February 26, 2004

SEND WRITTEN COMMENTS TO:

Cris Matthews
Department of Ecology
Southwest Regional Office
PO Box 47775
Olympia WA 98504-7775
(360) 407-6388

INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

The Agreed Order may be viewed at the following locations:

Department of Ecology
Southwest Regional Office
300 Desmond Drive
Lacey, WA
(360) 407-6949

Longview Public Library
1600 Louisiana
Longview, WA 98632
(360) 577-3380

What is Being Done

To date, Weyerhaeuser has removed much of the mercury-contaminated soil, and worked with Ecology to assess ground and surface water contamination and evaluate possible effects to the Columbia River. The Agreed Order directs Weyerhaeuser to implement a cleanup action plan that will be protective of human health and the environment, and administer:

- Long term institutional controls including site maintenance and restrictions of access and future site development, and;
- Environmental monitoring to protect ground water and the Columbia River.

What Happens Next

Involvement in the public participation process will be encouraged through a mailing sent to potentially interested parties. This mailing will describe the public participation plan and opportunities for involvement.

Ecology will publish the draft Agreed Order for public evaluation and comment. This public comment period will run for 30 days. Notice of the public comment period for the Agreed Order will be advertised in The Daily News (the local Longview newspaper) and through a press release. Notice of the availability of the draft Agreed Order will be included in the initial mailing to potentially interested parties.

Ecology Wants Your Comments

You are invited to read and comment on the proposed Agreed Order. 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. To review more detailed documents than those found in the information repositories, contact Cris Matthews of the Department of Ecology at (360) 407-6388.

Please submit your written comments to Cris Matthews at the address noted. Ecology will respond to all written comments received, and will revise the proposed Agreed Order if necessary or appropriate. Updates of site activities will be provided to those who submit comments or ask to be placed on the site mailing list.