

## How can I influence Ecology's decision?

The format you choose is up to you. You don't need to type your comments as long as they are easy to read. Send them by mail or e-mail, or hand-deliver them before the Public Comment Period ends.

1. **Be brief so the reviewer won't miss the point** of your comment.
2. **Be specific** so the reviewer knows what you want. Say, "I am concerned about how this will affect small seafood processors because..." rather than just saying, "Don't do this."
3. **Know your subject** so that your comments are both focused and accurate. Refer to the specific sections in the proposed document, preferably in the same order that they appear, so that we can follow your point(s).
4. **State the facts** and back them up where possible. Be sure to reveal your sources of information to help make your point stronger.

Publication # 04-10-039

*If you need this information in an alternate format, please contact the Water Quality Program at 425-649-7041. If you are a person with a speech or hearing impairment, call 711, or 800-833-6388 for TTY.*



## How to Comment Effectively

On  
**Water Cleanup Plans**

**"Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)"**



A Guide

# HOW TO COMMENT EFFECTIVELY

## Why Should I Comment?

It's your community and your quality of life that's affected if your water is polluted. The people who live and work in the watershed will ultimately take the actions that are needed to improve or clean up the water.

Although the Department of Ecology is bound by existing state and federal laws, you can influence how solutions are achieved. Sharing your ideas and what you know about local conditions will result in a better plan to improve water quality.



## How Does the Public Comment Process Work?

Ecology issues a **public notice** to let people know a TMDL Submittal Report (see below) is available for public comment. The **public comment period** lasts a minimum of thirty calendar days. During that time, you may submit written comments to Ecology, which may result in changes to the TMDL Submittal Report.

The TMDL Submittal Report is a two-part document that consists of a report on the water quality study, usually conducted by Ecology, and a summary implementation strategy, usually developed by a local advisory group working with Ecology.

TMDL Submittal Reports can be long, and are very technical in places. You may want to focus your comments on certain portions. The section called the "summary implementation strategy" discusses the cleanup

activities proposed in your watershed. This section is often where local knowledge and priorities can have the most influence.

Ecology considers each comment received. The final Submittal Report contains an appendix, **Response to Comments**, which explains how and why the public comments did or did not cause us to change the final document.

### Remind me what a TMDL is!

Water Cleanup Plans or TMDLs

- describe the type, amount and sources of water pollution in a water body;
- analyze how much the pollution needs to be reduced or eliminated to meet water quality standards; and
- provide targets and strategies to control the pollution.