

Washington State Department of Transportation Draft Municipal Stormwater General Permit

Public Comment Period to begin

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) has issued a draft general permit to the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to cover stormwater discharges. A public comment period begins on May 21, 2008.

Ecology encourages the public to comment on the following documents:

- The draft permit and fact sheet, which includes,
 - ❖ The WSDOT Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) plan—an appendix to the permit, and
 - ❖ The Highway Runoff Manual (HRM)—an appendix to the permit.
- An interagency agreement between WSDOT and Ecology regarding the statewide application of the 2008 HRM.

To view or download an electronic copy of these drafts visit

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/wsdot.html

You may comment on the draft permit from May 21, 2008 until 5 p.m. on June 24, 2008.

We prefer you submit your comments by email. We also ask that you reference specific permit text whenever possible.

To request a hard copy of the draft permit or to submit comments on the draft documents, please contact Bill Hashim at bhas461@ecy.wa.gov or at the address in the column at right.

Workshops and public hearing

During the public comment period, Ecology will host **three workshops** and one **public hearing**.

The **workshops** provide an informal venue in which Ecology will give a presentation on the draft permit and the public may ask questions and get answers from Ecology's permit writer. The **public hearing** is a formal hearing process where people may provide public testimony for the official record. Ecology may not respond to questions or comments during the formal hearing.

Ecology will issue an official *Response to Comments* that addresses written comments and oral testimony some time after the close of the public comment period.

Workshops & Hearing

Spokane - Workshop Only

June 4, 2008, at 1 p.m.
Spokane Shadle Library
W. 2111 Wellesley Ave.
Spokane, WA
509-444-5390

Bellevue – Workshop Only

June 5, 2008, at 1 p.m.
Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190-160th Ave SE
Bellevue, WA
425-649-7000

Lacey - Workshop & Hearing

June 23, 2008, at 1 p.m.
Timberland Regional Library
500 College St SE
Lacey, WA
360-491-3860

Contact Information

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Special Accommodations:

If you need this publication in an alternate format, call the Water Quality Program at 360-407-6700. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

The final WSDOT Municipal Stormwater General Permit

After Ecology receives and considers all public comments, it will make necessary changes and issue the final permit. If public comments cause a substantial change in the permit, another public notice and comment period may follow. If there are no substantial changes to the draft, Ecology expects to issue the permit in late summer. The permit will be effective 30 days later. Once issued, Ecology will send a copy of the Notice of Issuance and Ecology's *Response to Comments* to everyone who submitted written comments or gave public testimony.

Background information

As part of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), Congress established the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The NPDES law requires entities that discharge stormwater into surface waters of the state to have a permit. The CWA considers pipes, ditches, and other conveyance systems that carry runoff from state highways and related facilities to be municipal storm sewer systems. Therefore, WSDOT must seek and obtain coverage under a municipal stormwater permit for many of its facilities.

Ecology developed the Phase I and Phase II municipal stormwater general permits primarily for municipalities and the variety of land uses typically associated with urban areas. WSDOT applied for its own permit because a WSDOT-only permit better fits the highway system and the nature of its operations—Ecology agreed.

The WSDOT general permit will regulate stormwater runoff from state highways, maintenance facilities, park and ride lots, ferry terminals, and rest areas. The draft permit addresses the legal requirements and regulates the discharge of pollutants to protect surface water quality in Washington State. Once Ecology issues this permit, it will replace WSDOT's existing coverage under the Phase I Municipal General Permits.

What is stormwater and why is it a problem?

Rain and snowmelt runs off surfaces such as rooftops, paved streets, highways, and parking lots. As water runs off these surfaces, it can pick up pollution such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, metals, soil, and animal waste. From here, the water often flows directly into a local stream, bay, or lake. Or, it goes into a storm drain and continues through storm pipes until it is released—untreated—into a local waterway.

Polluted stormwater is the state's largest source of urban water pollution. In general, untreated stormwater is unsafe, for people, fish, and wildlife. It degrades water quality, can contaminate drinking water supplies, and harms aquatic habitats.

Where can I get more information?

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/wsdot.html>

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Environment/waterquality>