

Information for Buying or Selling a Home

Dirt Alert: What's in your soil?



Selling or buying a home in King or Pierce County?

The former Asarco copper smelter in north Tacoma polluted over 1,000 square miles of soil with arsenic and lead. King and Pierce counties have the highest levels of arsenic and lead, but they also have free “Dirt Alert” services for residents and homeowners.

Why It's Important to Know About Your Soil

Arsenic and lead in soils pose a long-term health risk, especially for young children. People are exposed by swallowing soil or breathing in dust, but not through skin contact. Everyone has a right to know about hazards in their environment.

What can I do if I am selling my home?

- **You must comply with state disclosure law.** Chapter 64.06 RCW, or “Form 17,” asks if the seller knows of any soil contamination. You can get this form from your real estate broker. If you have questions about filling it out, you should seek legal advice.
- **Get test results.** Dirt Alert has sampled thousands of yards in King and Pierce counties. Check the Arsenic in Soils Database to see if your property has arsenic and lead data (see link to the right). The yard may have had soil removed or may qualify for soil removal in the future.
- **Get your soils tested.** Depending on where you live, your yard may qualify for free soil testing. To search for services in your area, visit the Smelter Search page (see links to the right).
- **Call us.** For help interpreting test results and soil removal information, contact your local Dirt Alert program (right).

What should I do if I am buying a home?

- **Find out what's in the soil.** Check the Arsenic in Soils Database (right) to see if the property has arsenic and lead data.
- **Check the seller disclosure form (see above).** A buyer cannot waive the right to Form 17 if the answer to any of the questions in the “Environment” section would be “yes.”
- **Learn more.** There is no immediate danger. The health risk is long term and simple actions can help you avoid exposure to soils. Some yards are eligible for free soil removal. Contact your local Dirt Alert program (right) for more information.

More Information

Smelter Search

Check if a home is in an affected area and what services are available: <http://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/smeltersearch>

Arsenic in Soils Database

Search for soil testing results and soil removal information: <http://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/areispublic>

Local Dirt Alert Programs

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept.
Greg Tanbara, (253) 798-4784
E-mail: DirtAlert@tpchd.org
Website: www.tpchd.org/DirtAlert

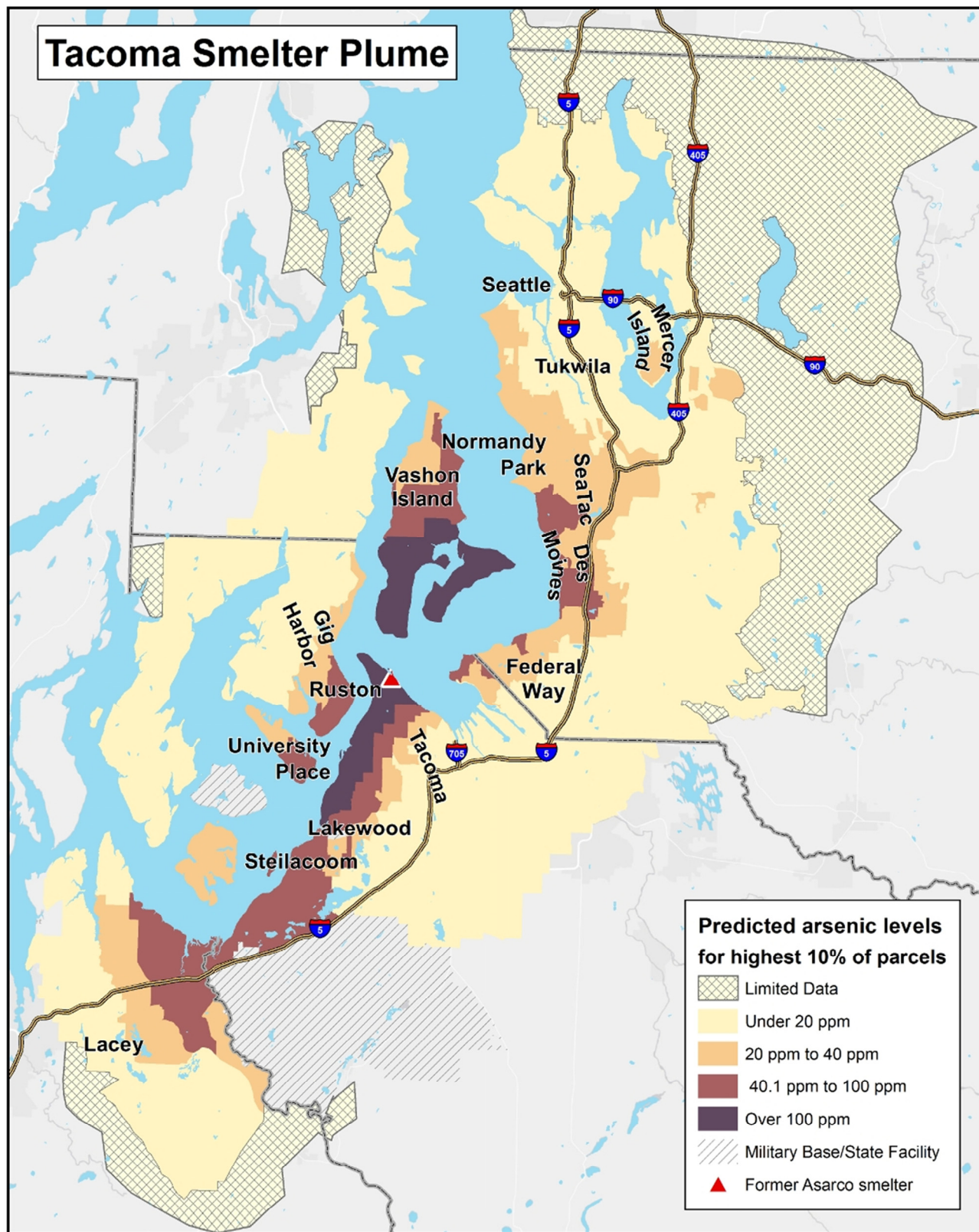
Public Health—Seattle & King County
Denise Sharify, (206) 477-DIRT
E-mail: DirtAlert@kingcounty.gov
Website: www.kingcounty.gov/health/tsp

Department of Ecology

Website: www.ecy.wa.gov/toxics/tacoma-smelter.html
Marian Abbett, WA Dept. of Ecology
(360) 407-6257
E-mail: Marian.Abbett@ecy.wa.gov



Facility Site ID #: 89267963



Areas impacted by arsenic and lead soil contamination from the former Asarco smelter.

If you need this fact sheet in another format, call reception at (360) 407-6300. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with speech disability call 877-833-6341.