

Ecology Seeks Comments on Draft Revisions to Microsoft's Oxford Data Center Air Permit

Este boletín incluye información sobre el Centro de Datos "Oxford" localizado en Quincy, Washington. El boletín también está disponible en español. Si usted necesita más información en español sobre este proyecto, por favor contáctenos al (360) 407-6084 o a preguntas@ecy.wa.gov.

Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued a permit to Microsoft (Approval Order No. 14AQ-E537) on August 15, 2014. The permit allowed Microsoft to install and operate equipment at a new data center called Oxford Data Center (Oxford).

Before completing construction and beginning operation of the data center, Microsoft applied to change the permit. **Ecology is seeking public comment only on the changes to the permit.**

Microsoft's Requested Changes

Microsoft asked for flexibility in how they operate their emergency back-up diesel engine generators. This would more accurately reflect the range of situations in which the engines will operate.

Emergency engines need flexibility when operating because power needs for data centers vary significantly throughout the day. The engines will most often operate between 25 and 75 percent of capacity, but flexibility to run between 10 and 100 percent capacity is needed during unplanned outages as well as during other planned situations.

While this flexibility could result in an increase in the amount of air pollution, the potential emissions will still be in compliance with state and federal air quality standards.

In addition, Microsoft requested changes to how they show they are complying with permit limits. The new permit allows them to reduce the minimum number of engines being tested *per year* from two to one. However, it extends the minimum number of years they must test and requires one more engine be tested overall. The effect of these changes increases the minimum number of engines tested from eight to nine and the minimum number of years Microsoft will be required to test the engines from 10 years to 25 years.

Public Comment Period

May 28 – July 13, 2015

Public Hearing

July 9, 2015

Quincy Community Center
115 "F" Street SW
Quincy, WA 98848

Agenda

5:00 p.m. Meet and Greet
5:30 p.m. Presentations/Q&A
6:30 p.m. Formal Hearing

Documents available at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/quincydatacenter/index.html>

Quincy City Hall
104 "B" Street SW
Quincy, WA 98848

Quincy Library
208 Central Avenue South
Quincy, WA 98848

Washington Dept of Ecology
Eastern Regional Office
4601 North Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99205

Submit comments to

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Contact information

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Ecology Wants Your Comments

You may review and comment on the proposed revisions to the draft air permit through July 13, 2015. This public comment period presents an opportunity to have your ideas and comments heard by Ecology.

Documents for review are available at Quincy City Hall and the Quincy Library. A public hearing is also being held at the Quincy Community Center (115 “F” Street SW) on July 9, 2015. This is an opportunity to learn about the project, and to voice your comments or concerns. See the side bar on the front of this document for details about the public hearings and other ways to submit comments.

How did Ecology Evaluate the Impacts of Data Center Air Pollution?

Ecology used a process called ‘Community Modeling’. To do this, a computer model adds any new data center emissions to those from other air pollution sources and determines if the total emissions are likely to be harmful to human health. Ecology reviews the results from the computer models to determine air quality impacts and assess possible health risks. Community modeling was used in this case because there are so many data centers located in Quincy.

The Health Risks of Diesel Exhaust

The toxic air pollutants in diesel exhaust include nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, organic compounds, and tiny particles called diesel exhaust particulates. Ecology evaluated the levels of these pollutants during the permit review process. Diesel exhaust particles and nitrogen dioxide are the pollutants most likely to be produced in high enough amounts to potentially affect health. For more information about the health effects of these pollutants, read Ecology’s publication “*Focus on Diesel Exhaust Health Risks.*” This is available in English and Spanish.

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