

# WHAT IS A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD?

## GENERAL PROCESS

A public comment period (PCP) is the range of time the public has to submit input before an agency makes a final decision on a proposed rule or modification.

Ecology's Nuclear Waste Program (NWP) primarily has PCPs for permit modifications or permit renewals related to the Hanford Site.

### Before the comment period begins

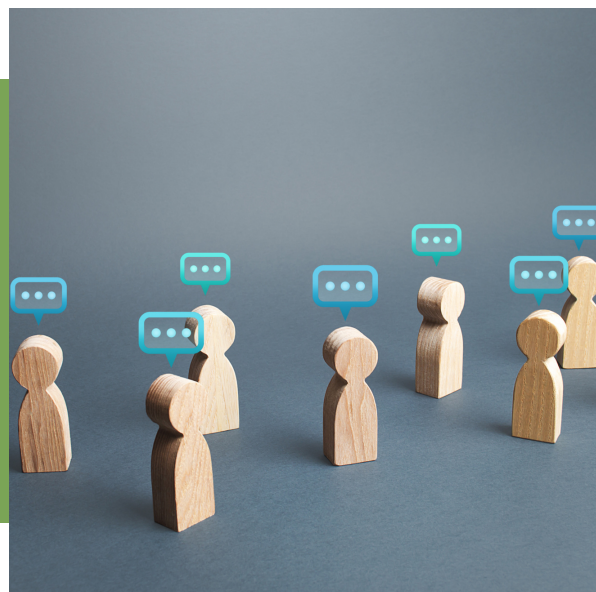
- The permit team determines if a permit needs to be modified or renewed.
- The permit team drafts the modification or renewal.
  - This team might be the permittee, NWP staff, or both.
- Regulations determine minimum amount of days required for a comment period, based on type (30, 45, 60, etc).
- Regulations also determine the ways the public must be notified.

### Comment period starts

- Comments are collected.
- Regulations determine when a hearing or public meeting is required.

### Comment period ends

- All the comments are collected and reviewed.
- The draft permit can be modified based on comments.
- The permit team responds to the comments.
- A response to comments document is developed.
- Final permit issued with response to comments.
- There is a 30 day window for appeal.
- If there is no appeal, work begins!



## WHY IT MATTERS

- A chance to make your voice heard.
- Commenting is an opportunity to influence or change the permit modification or renewal.
- Commenting makes better permits.
- Public comment ensures a transparent process with balanced input from interested parties.
- Hanford cleanup decisions impact the public.

## THINGS TO KNOW

- Anyone can submit comments concerning permit modifications or renewals.
- Comments can influence the agencies' actions.
- Public comments can offer ideas and concerns not considered by the agencies.

## FIND COMMENT PERIODS

Nuclear Waste Program's public comment page  
[Ecology.wa.gov/NWP-comment-periods](https://www.ecology.wa.gov/NWP-comment-periods)

Other Hanford PCPs  
<https://www.hanford.gov/page.cfm/Outreach/PublicCommentOpportunities>

Ecology's public input & events page  
<https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>

*To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 509-372-7950 or email at [Hanford@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Hanford@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.*