DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington

Notice of Public Comment Period for Taylor Way & Alexander Ave Fill Area Cleanup Site

We are accepting comments from
Wednesday April 15, 8:00 AM to Friday May 15, 11:59 PM

How to submit comments

Online (preferred):
Scan the QR code or visit
go.ecology.wa.gov/comment4692

Scan to comment

By mail or email:
Steve Teel, Site Manager
Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775
Steve.Teel@ecy.wa.gov

Site Information

Address:
1500 Block Taylor Way E, Tacoma
Cleanup Site ID: 4692
Facility ID: 1403183

Where to review documents

Visit go.ecology.wa.gov/4692
Scroll down to "Documents" and open the drop-down menu.

Tacoma Public Library, Main Branch
1102 Tacoma Avenue
Tacoma, WA 98402

Ecology Lacey office *appointment only*
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503
PublicDisclosureSWRO@ecy.wa.gov
360-407-6365

Documents Available for Public Comment

The Port of Tacoma is proposing a partial cleanup action on two Port-owned parcels within the Taylor Way & Alexander Ave Fill Area (TWAAFA) cleanup site.

Ecology is now accepting comments on two documents:

Interim Action Work Plan: The proposed plan to address hazardous substances and auto fluff in the eastern portion of Hylebos Marsh. It will also support the Port's efforts to eradicate the invasive Mediterranean vineyard snail.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Nonsignificance: We determined the proposed cleanup is not likely to cause significant environmental harm. We considered environmental, historical, and cultural factors in this process.

Port parcels in winter.

Port parcels in summer.

Join us at the South Sound Sustainability Expo!

Ecology will have a table at this free, public event. Come meet our Toxic Cleanup Program staff and ask any questions you have about our cleanup work.

- **Date and Time:** Saturday, May 2, 2026; 10 AM-3 PM
- **Location:** Prairie Line Trail, UW Tacoma Campus

Learn more about this event at:
www.tacoma.uw.edu/southsoundsustainabilityexpo

Please email Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov if you have any questions about our participation in this event.

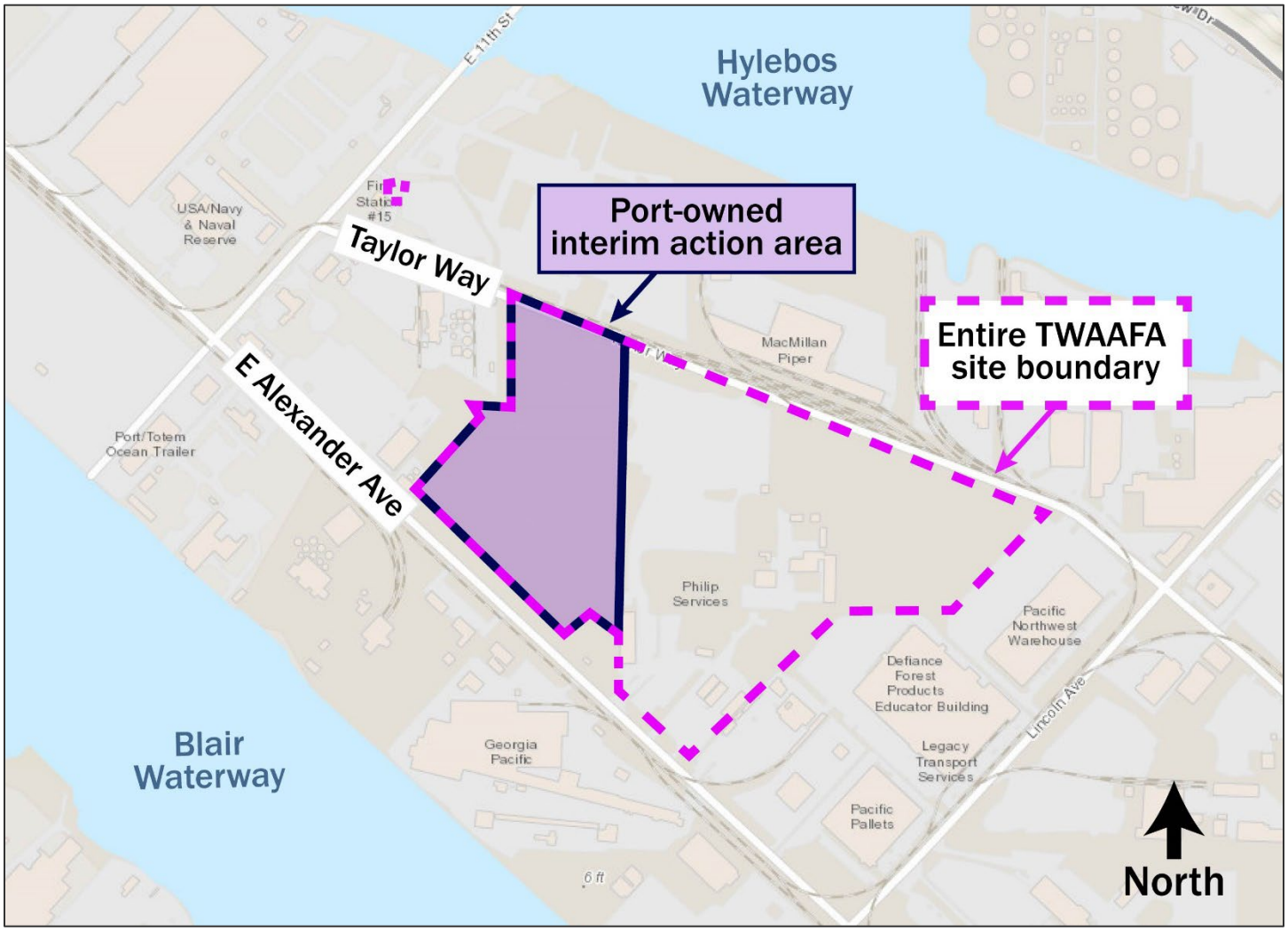
Overview of the TWAAFA Cleanup Site

This site is being cleaned up through Washington's cleanup law, the **Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA)**. A **cleanup site** is a place where a toxic substance is harming or threatening humans or the environment.

The site includes several different parcels. Today, most of the parcels within the site are used for industrial purposes. The proposed work will take place on two Port-owned parcels. Before the Port purchased these two parcels, they were used as an unpermitted landfill for industrial waste.

The two interim action parcels are vacant and undeveloped. The Port is negotiating a 50-year lease agreement for these parcels. The prospective tenant proposes building cold storage facilities. This includes office space, shipping and receiving, truck loading, and a rail dock.

Elsewhere on the site, there was an unpermitted landfill for chemical and petroleum storage and recycling, hazardous waste treatment and storage, lumber milling, and warehousing and shipping operations.



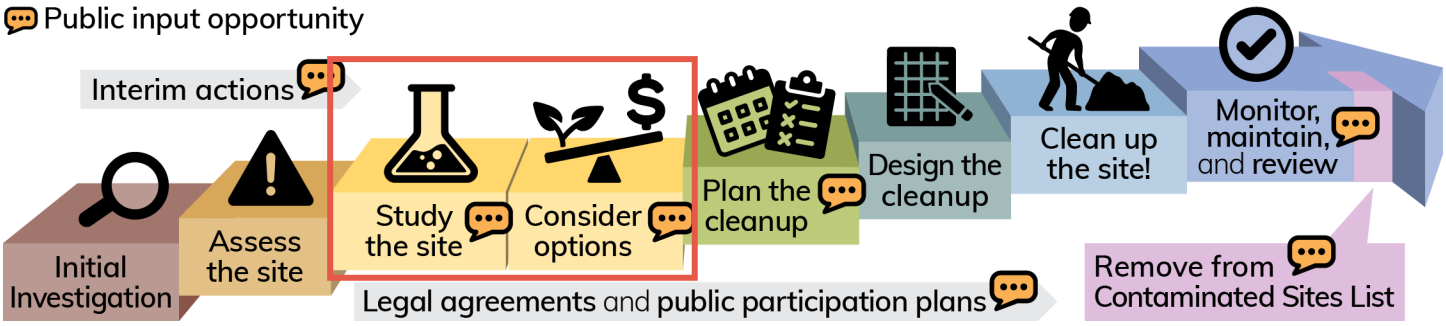
Location of the TWAAFA cleanup site. The entire site is outlined by a dashed pink line. The Port-owned interim action area is outlined by a solid purple line with purple fill.

Cleanup progress

Under state law, people or entities who pollute the air, land, or water are responsible for cleaning up the contamination. Ecology has identified four **potentially liable parties (PLPs)** responsible for cleaning up the entire site. The PLPs include General Metals of Tacoma, Occidental Chemical Corporation, Burlington Environmental LLC, and the Port of Tacoma.

Planning cleanup for the entire site is still in progress. The PLPs have studied the site, considered cleanup options, and drafted an investigation and cleanup options report. Ecology is currently reviewing their findings. After we finish reviewing the reports resulting from the site's studies and considerations (called a Remedial Investigation & Feasibility Study), we will develop a draft Cleanup Action Plan. The public will be able to review and comment on those documents before they are approved and implemented by Ecology.

The proposed interim action cleanup at the site is focused on two Port-owned parcels. The Port of Tacoma is the only PLP responsible for this interim action work.



Steps of Washington's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA).
The red rectangle shows where the TWAAFA site is currently in the process for the full site cleanup work.

Stay informed about Ecology's work at this site

To receive Ecology updates regarding the TWAAFA cleanup, sign up for updates by visiting Ecology's TWAAFA webpage.[1] To subscribe, click the blue "Subscribe to this site" button at the top right corner. Subscribers receive a weekly automated email whenever there's an open comment period, a new document, or other cleanup news. You can read more about this feature on Ecology's blog.[2]

You can also subscribe[3] to Ecology's email list for updates to work done in the Tacoma Tideflats/Commencement Bay area.

[1] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/4692
[2] https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/may-2025/updates-on-cleanup-sites-in-your-inbox
[3] https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_33

Overview of Proposed Interim Action

An **interim action** only partially addresses the cleanup of a site. The purpose of using an interim action can include addressing time-sensitive threats or extra actions to better assess site hazards. The Port of Tacoma is requesting this interim action to prevent workers and wildlife from being exposed to hazardous chemicals in the soil.

This interim action is not designed to be the final cleanup for this area. Ecology and the PLPs will propose the final cleanup action plan in the next step shown on the graphic, "plan the cleanup". While designing this interim action plan, Ecology made sure these actions would not rule out any future cleanup actions.

Contamination concerns

From 1946 until at least 1991, portions of the site received fill material that included:

- **Auto fluff**: auto debris that has been pulverized or fragmented. It includes things like wire, glass shards, upholstery, tire shards, paint chips, metal, string, plastic, and rubber. Auto fluff is mixed into sand, gravel, and silt in the ground.
- **Lime waste**: a waste product mixed in with auto fluff fill. Some lime waste has concentrations of chlorinated solvents.
- Other waste materials: **petroleum hydrocarbons**, **metals**, and **organic chemicals**.

A map showing the approximate location of autofluff contamination and wetlands within the Interim Action area.

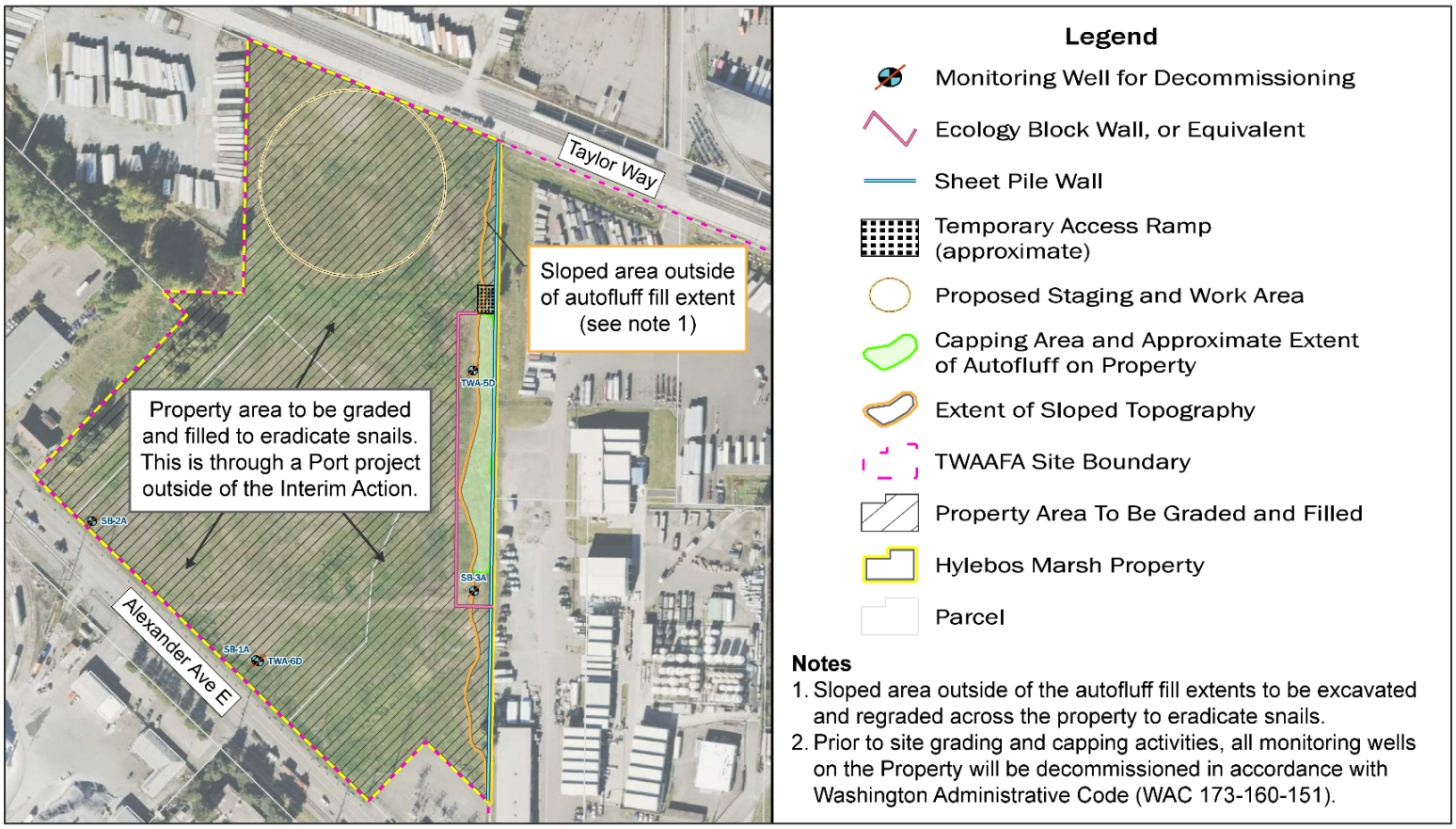
Logistics

Auto fluff with hazardous chemicals is in the eastern portion of the two parcels that the Port proposes to develop. This interim action will occur during the Port's invasive snail eradication project. More information about this project can be found on page 7.

To limit human and wildlife exposure to auto fluff, the Port proposes:

- Capping auto fluff and contaminated soil with a clean soil, gravel, and asphalt cap.
- Stabilizing the sides of the capped area with a retaining wall.
- Installing groundwater monitoring wells to collect samples for future investigation and cleanup planning.

These actions would prevent direct contact exposure by creating a physical barrier between the auto fluff hazards and potential receptors. The cap will also reduce surface water infiltration that could result in contamination leaching to groundwater.



Elements of Ecology's proposed Interim Action and the Port's snail eradication project.

Since this interim action would leave contamination at the site, Ecology requires **institutional controls**. These controls protect the integrity of the cap. In this case, Ecology would require:

- Signs and demarcation fabric around the cap to prevent disturbing the cap
- Annual inspections of the containment and cap to confirm the cap remains protective.

Institutional controls must also be considered during future steps of the cleanup process.

Permitting and engineering design

According to MTCA, cleanup projects under a legal order with the State can be exempt from the procedural requirements of local permits/approvals. These exemptions help the cleanup of contaminated sites move faster. Since the Port will also be working on broader developmental activities during this interim action, they will **not** seek exemptions for this interim action cleanup. The Port will follow the permitting process as per usual for this and related projects.

The Port has identified the following permits for their cleanup and snail eradication work:

- City of Tacoma Site Development Permit: required for any earthwork over one-acre.
- City of Tacoma Right-of-Way Work Order Permit: required to enable trucks and other vehicles to transit into the property.
- City of Tacoma Critical Areas Development Permit: required to fill wetlands on the property.
- Washington State Department of Ecology Administrative Order: required to fill wetlands on the property.
- Construction Stormwater General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit: required to appropriately manage stormwater during construction.
- Updating/obtaining applicable NPDES permit coverage for future stormwater discharges via the new stormwater utility system, required to appropriately manage stormwater after construction.

Schedule

The Port will submit a 90%-completed design plan for Ecology review. After Ecology's review, the Port will submit the final (100%) design for Ecology approval. Ecology will also review the Compliance Monitoring Plan and Soil Management Plan for the cleanup.

The Port anticipates getting all permits by June 2026, in between the 90% and 100% design stages.

After Ecology approves the final design, the Port will bid, contract, and schedule the proposed work. To minimize risk of spreading the snails, construction work should be performed during the dry season following permit approvals, anticipated for summer 2026.

Port of Tacoma Invasive Snail Eradication Plans

Ecology's proposed Interim Action Plan and the Port's invasive snail eradication project will be carried out at the same time and place. However, these two projects are separate. For this public comment period, we request public feedback on Ecology's interim action plan and SEPA determination. We have information about the Port's snail eradication project for context, as we considered elements of this project when evaluating the interim action plan and SEPA documents.

Mediterranean vineyard snail.
Source: Kristin Evered, Port of Tacoma

The **Mediterranean vineyard snail** is an invasive species first detected in the Tacoma Tideflats in 2005. Since 2007, the Port, other property owners, and the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA) have worked together to get rid of the invasive snails using various strategies.

According to WSDA and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), these invasive snails are a threat to state and national grain industries. The WSDA and USDA have requested the Port contain and fully eradicate the snails before they have the chance to spread. Besides crops, the snails also pose a likely threat to native plants.[4]

Past eradication efforts have shrunk the range of these invasive snails from 300-acres across the Tideflats to just a 5-acre area within the TWAAFA site. Wetlands within the Port-owned parcels of the TWAAFA site act as a refuge for the snail population. The remaining population is resilient and has survived past eradication efforts. The purpose of the snail eradication project is to modify the site conditions, making them inhospitable for the snails and their reproduction.

The Port proposes filling the wetlands and grading the parcels. Once the area has been leveled, the Port will cover areas known to harbor the snails with about six inches of consolidated fill material. WSDA will conduct three years of monitoring after the cap is installed to make sure the snails are gone from the parcels. Dogs trained to detect the presence of the snails will verify the effectiveness of the eradication effort.

To make up for filling the wetlands, the Port is required to perform mitigation. The purpose of mitigation is to have no net loss of wetland function. To learn more about the Port's mitigation plans, please review the Port of Tacoma's **Critical Areas Study and Mitigation Plan**.[5]

Ecology has given the Interim Action Plan a SEPA Determination of Non-Significance. Ecology considered the Port's mitigation work when making this determination. After considering the balance of benefits, Ecology concluded that the interim action cleanup will not cause significant harm. For more details on how Ecology's SEPA decisions and criteria, please see the **2026 SEPA Checklist and Determination Letter**.[6]

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[4] https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/priorityspecies/mediterranean-white-snail/
[5] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/168377 (download link, 39 MB file size)
[6] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/168554 (download link, 4.8 MB file size)

Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Comment Period for the Taylor Way & Alexander Ave Fill Area Cleanup Site

Interim Action Plan & State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination

Comments accepted:
April 15 – May 15, 2026

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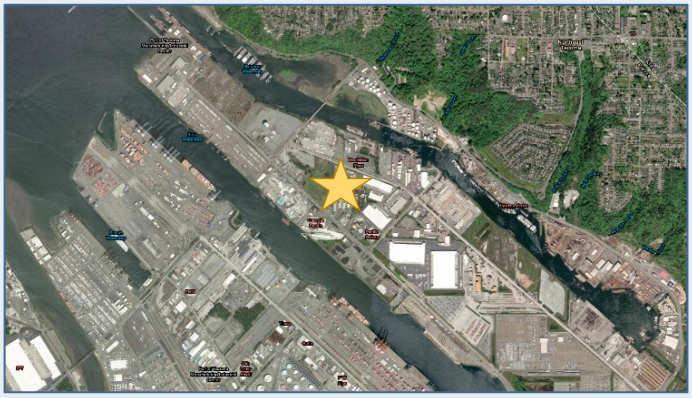
Contact Ecology:
Abby Zabrodsky, Public Involvement Coordinator
Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov



The cleanup project area in the Tacoma Tideflats (yellow star)

ADA Accessibility: To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-250-0561 or email at Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov, or visit ecology.wa.gov/ADA. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

Language Access: We offer translation and interpretation services at no cost. To request them, email Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov or call 564-250-0561. If you call, ask for an interpreter to be connected with one.