



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 10

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OFFICE OF
WATER AND
WATERSHEDS

JUN 13 2012

Mr. B.J. Kieffer, Director
Spokane Tribal Natural Resources Department
P.O. Box 100
Wellpinit, Washington 99040

Dear Mr. Kieffer:

I am writing in response to your May 21, 2012, letter to Jim Bellatty, Washington Department of Ecology, indicating that the Spokane Tribe is withdrawing its participation and support for the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (Task Force). The Spokane Tribe has been instrumental in the formation and operation of the Task Force over the past 10 months. As a sovereign, the Tribe has provided valuable direction in this effort in working with the other sovereigns, Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA is committed to the Task Force, and working with the sovereign governments and other entities including dischargers in both states, conservation groups, and local agencies. We believe that the collaborative approach that the Task Force is embracing to address PCB and other toxic reductions in the Spokane River Basin is the right approach to achieve meaningful progress. All agree that this approach will lead "straight to implementation," and is the best pathway to achieve actual PCB reductions. With this level of stakeholder support, we encourage the Tribe to consider returning as an active participant on the Task Force.

As referenced in your letter we have stated that the EPA does not have the authority under the Clean Water Act to require the Idaho dischargers to the Spokane River to participate in the Task Force. However, we are willing and committed to continue to search for an accountable process for the Idaho dischargers to ensure participation in the Task Force and to achieve reduction of discharges of PCBs and other toxics to the Spokane River.

The EPA is committed to the Task Force as a much needed collaborative process and work effort to develop a plan and implement actions to reduce PCBs in the Spokane River Basin. We are also committed to work with the Spokane Tribe and others to move forward on this important work. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 206-553-4198.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Bussell, Director
Office of Water and Watersheds

cc: Mr. Greg Abrahamson, Chairman, Spokane Tribe Business Council
Mr. Ted Sturdevant, Director, Washington State Department of Ecology, Lacey
Mr. Grant Pfeifer, Regional Director, Washington State Department of Ecology, Spokane
Mr. Jim Bellatty, Water Quality Program Manager, Washington State Department of Ecology, Spokane
Mr. Ted Knight, Attorney, Spokane Tribe of Indians
Mr. Dan Redline, Regional Administrator, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Coeur d'Alene