

October 8, 2012

The Honorable Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington State
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

Thank you for your past support and awareness of the environmental difficulties facing the Spokane Community in meeting clean water standards for the Spokane River. This letter is sent on behalf of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) in support of the Department of Ecology's budget package entitled "Spokane River PCB Source Abatement." A copy of the proposal is attached.

The Department of Ecology has chosen an innovative process of bringing all of the parties together to address the problem and arrive at consensus decisions to address the toxics issue within the Spokane River. The Department of Ecology, EPA, the NPDES permittees, the Department of Health, and local health and conservation groups have formed the SRRTTF to develop an alternative plan to a formal Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to reduce toxics in the Spokane River. This is a "straight to implementation" approach that is supported by the State Department of Ecology and EPA. This five year approach to reducing PCBs in the river will result in improved water quality while avoiding additional regulation.

The purpose of the SRRTTF is to "work collaboratively to characterize the sources of toxics in the Spokane River and identify and implement appropriate actions needed to made measureable progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards for the State of Washington, State of Idaho, and The Spokane Tribe of Indians and in the interests of public and environmental health." This is a complicated and multifaceted issue with no easy resolution, but the SRRTTF is dedicated to a collaborative process to reduce toxics in the river.

The SRRTTF, facilitated by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, represents municipal and industrial dischargers, conservation and environmental interests, the Spokane Regional Health District, and state and federal environmental agencies. For the municipal and industrial wastewater dischargers to the river, participating in the SRRTTF is a requirement in the water quality permits issued by the Department of Ecology in 2011. The Idaho facilities that discharge to the river are expected to receive permits from EPA later this year that may include a similar requirement.

Our request is that you support the Department of Ecology's \$1,000,006 biennium budget proposal for the Spokane River PCB Source Abatement Decision Package to aid in this effort. Without state support, the SRRTTF consensus process may end in a TMDL that will be time consuming, expensive and which may yield results negatively impacting NPDES permittees, and thereby the Spokane economic community. A consensus among major impacted parties will result in large dividends in the region addressing both existing and future environmental problems, as well as providing an innovative model for addressing difficult environmental issues.

Again, we urge your support of this important budget request as it impacts both the health of the citizens, economic prosperity, and environmental progress for the State of Washington.

Sincerely,



Rick Eichstaedt
Spokane Riverkeeper



N. Bruce Rawls, P.E.
Spokane County Director of Utilities



Rick Romero
City of Spokane, Utilities Director

On behalf of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF)
www. <http://srrttf.org>

Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
County of Spokane
City of Spokane
Inland Empire Paper Company
Kaiser Aluminum
Spokane Regional Health District
Washington State Department of Health
Lake Spokane Association
The Lands Council
Spokane Riverkeeper
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

cc

Stan Marshburn, Director, Office of Financial Management
Sheila Collins, Eastern Washington Representative, Governor's Office