**SPOKANE RIVER REGIONAL TOXICS TASK FORCE**

**FUNDING SUPPORT LETTER**

Dear Member of the Washington Legislature:

This letter is sent on behalf of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (Task Force) requesting your support by including a funding proviso in the amount of $800,000 in both the House and Senate budgets. This funding will be used for the Task Force’s top priorities and promotes the most effective use of resources to obtain the most expedient and greatest reduction of PCBs in our watershed.

The Task Force is an innovative process that brings all stakeholders together in a collaborative effort to address concerns of toxics in the Spokane River. Ecology, the U.S. EPA, NPDES permittees, the Department of Health, and local conservation groups have formed the Task Force to develop a more efficient and effective plan to reduce toxics than the conventional Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process. Facilitated by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, this “straight to implementation” approach is supported by both Ecology and EPA.

The purpose of the Task Force is to “work collaboratively to characterize the sources of toxics in the

Spokane River and identify and implement appropriate actions needed to made measurable 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 complex and multifaceted issue with no simple solution, but the Task Force is dedicated to a collaborative process that will result in a reduction of toxics to the Spokane River.

The Task Force and its members are dedicated to real progress. Significant measures have been taken to prevent PCBs from entering the watershed, including removal of contaminated soils and the collection and removal of sediments from storm water systems. Efforts by SRRTTF members have identified commonly used products such as hydroseed, deicer and road paints with elevated levels of PCBs to help inform consumers and businesses. Recent work thanks to prior funding support from the WA State legislature has identified locations of ground water sources contributing PCB loads to the river.

Our request is that you support an $800,000 biennium budget proposal to aid in furthering our efforts. Without state support, the Task Force consensus process will likely end in a TMDL that will be time-consuming and expensive, will delay water quality improvements and will negatively impact NPDES Permittees and the Spokane community. Conversely, a consensus among the stakeholders 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.

Thank you for your support.