Date

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

54 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Murray:

The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force writes you in our eleventh-hour effort to have Congress include changes in the anticipated reform of the Toxics Substance Control Act, H.R. 2576, regarding inadvertent PCB production. While we applaud the efforts of the House and Senate to address the broader issue, not addressing inadvertent PCB production is a glaring omission.

We trust you are well aware the Task Force and many of its members have been working with you and other elected officials as well as the Environmental Protection Agency to make this common-sense change. An excerpt from a letter the Task Force sent to EPA officials (Assistant Administrator of the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention and the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance) on Oct. 23, 2013 provides one example:

[*T]he Task Force requests that EPA ultimately eliminate the provisions under TSCA that allows for the continued manufacturing of products to contain inadvertently produced PCBs in order to ensure that our watershed can achieve State and Tribal water quality standards required under the Clean Water Act. Lowering the allowable limit under TSCA is not a viable solution when EPA’s approved State and Tribal EPA’s water quality standards are nearly one billion times lower than the current allowance. Furthermore, this allowance has shifted the cost from those permitted to manufacture these products to our municipal ratepayers and businesses that are ultimately burdened with cleaning up someone else’s source of pollution. Our only opportunity for success in achieving stringent water quality standards and providing economic fairness is dependent upon the elimination of these new sources that continue to enter our environment.*

The content of that paragraph from our 2013 letter remains ever-more relevant today, with the major change being that water quality standards under the Clean Water Act are now even more stringent than when we said “nearly one billion times lower than the current (TSCA) allowance,” meaning the need for substantial reduction in the permissible level of PCB contamination in manufactured products under TSCA is even more pressing. In fact the current disparity between TSCA and the water quality standard set by the Spokane Tribe and approved by EPA is *38 billion times*.

Through our recent efforts, the SRRTTF has identified significant levels of PCBs in a multitude of common products including: children’s clothing, children’s sidewalk chalk, comic books, cosmetics, personal care products, packaging materials, plastics, Hydroseed, deicers, road paints, and recycled paper to name just a few. Besides the obvious direct human exposure, the PCBs in these products have multiple pathways to the environment through wastewater, stormwater and atmospheric deposition.

The very purpose and core of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force is to improve and maintain the quality of our region’s water. We are a group of environmental organizations, businesses, cities, counties, local health districts, regulators and others coalescing around our Vision Statement, which states:

*The Regional Toxics Task Force will work collaboratively to characterize the sources of toxics in the Spokane River and identify and implement appropriate actions needed to make measurable progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards for the State of Washington.*

We remain steadfastly committed to that collaborative effort, yet find it an impossible goal when federal regulation allows inadvertent PCBs to enter our watershed at a concentration 38 billion times higher than the water quality standard that our community must meet. We again ask for your attention and assistance in bringing some semblance of common sense to this PCB paradox.

If we can provide additional information or answer any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The undersigned members of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

CC:

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Jim Risch

Senator Mike Crapo

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Congressman Raul Labrador

Congressman Mike Simpson

Governor Jay Inslee

Maia Bellon, Director, Department of Ecology

**SEND AN ORIGINAL LETTER TO EACH TO THEIR RESPECTIVE DC ADDRESSES AND CC THE OTHERS ON EACH**