



## SPOKANE RIVER REGIONAL TOXICS TASK FORCE FUNDING REQUEST LETTER

Dear Governor Inslee:

This letter is sent on behalf of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) requesting your support by including a funding proviso for the SRRTTF in the amount of \$800,000 into the Governor's budget for the 2017-2019 biennium. This funding is to be used for the SRRTTF's top priorities and promotes the most significant and effective PCB reduction efforts in our watershed, which the SRRTTF stands ready to implement under its Comprehensive Plan.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) has chosen this innovative process to bring all stakeholders together in a collaborative effort to address water quality concerns in the Spokane River. The SRRTTF, facilitated by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, represents municipal and industrial dischargers, conservation and environmental interests, and state and federal regulatory agencies. This "direct- to-implementation" narrative approach has the support of both Ecology and EPA as an alternative plan to the formal Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process.

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 make 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 complicated and multifaceted issue with no simple solution, but the SRRTTF is dedicated to this collaborative process that will continue to result in a reduction of toxics to the Spokane River.

A report from Ecology shows that the SRRTTF has made measurable progress toward identifying, reducing and controlling PCBs and related toxic chemicals in the Spokane River. The report concludes that "the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force has removed 265 pounds of PCBs from soil, wastewater and stormwater, and eliminated the potential for another 18 pounds from reaching the river." The past success of the SRRTTF would not have been possible without funding from the state. The work of the SRRTTF is leaning more towards the implementation of control actions, so continued progress to reduce toxics within our watershed will be highly dependent upon the amount of funding directed towards these efforts.

Our request is that you support an \$800,000 biennium budget proposal to aid in this effort. Without state support, the SRRTTF consensus process will likely end in a TMDL that will be time consuming, expensive, delay water quality improvements and negatively impact NPDES permittees and the Spokane community. 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 very much for your support.