Alternative Recommendation for Press Release - DRAFT

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**Spokane River Regional Toxics Trask Force Completes Comprehensive Plan to address PCB Pollution in the Spokane River**

Spokane, WA – A positive step toward a cleaner Spokane River was quietly recorded this past December. The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) released a comprehensive plan that identifies actions that, if implemented, should reduce the amount of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a toxic chemical, entering the Spokane River. The SRRTTF is a diverse body of stakeholders that represents dischargers, environmental groups, and agencies formed to develop a plan to bring the Spokane River into compliance with applicable water quality standards for PCBs. Convened in 2012, this plan represents conclusions reached through data collection, evolving technology, national expert consultation and deliberation between SRRTTF members.

The Plan lays out the findings of several years of studies that established sources of PCBs and the many pathways that PCBs travel to enter the river and it outlines concrete actions and practices necessary to reduce PCB entry into the River. Because PCB pollution has multiple sources and pathways to the River, the control actions are diverse and complex. Actions include maintaining or improving current efforts identified as impactful plus exploring potential new control actions. The Implementation portion of the plan lists milestones, timelines and metrics to assess effectiveness for each of the new or expanded control actions.

Areas identified include, but are not limited to:

* wastewater treatment
* known site remediation
* stormwater controls
* low impact development (LID)
* purchasing standards for products known to contain PCBs
* support of green chemistry alternatives
* regulatory rulemaking to reduce origin of PCBs
* building demolition and renovation control
* education efforts to help the public understand the scope of PCB pollution and reduction actions

View the entire plan at <http://srrttf.org/>.

Background

The Spokane River begins in northern Idaho at the outlet of Coeur d’Alene Lake and flows west 112 miles to the Columbia River. Sections of the Spokane River and Lake Spokane have been placed on Washington’s EPA-approved 303(d) list of impaired waters for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The impairments are based on concentrations of PCBs measured in fish tissue that exceeded a fish tissue equivalent concentration for applicable water quality standards.

PCBs are a man-made chemical produced for industrial use by Monsanto between the late 1930s until they were largely banned as an environmental and human health hazard in 1979. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, individuals who are continually exposed to PCBs are at increased risk of developing cancer and experiencing toxic effects on bodily systems. They are very durable and used in applications from transformer oils, garden hoses, and caulking to rolling out aluminum in industrial plants. PCBs are still allowed in products where they are inadvertently produced, such as yellow pigments in paper products, road paints and some hydro seed products. Because they resist breaking down in the environment, both the older, legacy PCBs and the newer inadvertent PCBs still show up in residential and industrial wastewater, stormwater, groundwater and soils and ultimately find their way into our waterways.

**Very Rough Draft for InfoGraphic – Next Page**

**Task Force convenes in 2012**

**PCB Source Assessment**

**Evolving regulations**

**Expert Consultation**

**Monitoring work**

**PCB Control Actions**

**Task Force delivers Comprehensive Plan**

**Future Actions and Assessment**

**SPOKANE RIVER**

Regional Toxics Task Force

Comprehensive Plan Development

for Reduction of PCBs to the Spokane River