

[Ecology Proposes Changes to Standards For Cleaning Up In-water Sediments](#)

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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The public is invited to review and comment on draft rule changes to the state's Sediment Management Standards (SMS) for cleaning up contaminated in-water sediments. In 1991, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) adopted the SMS rule to guide management of sediments. The SMS rule is used to conduct environmental cleanup work, manage the dredging of sediment for navigation and cleanup, and manage sources of contamination to sediment from dischargers. The proposed changes will clarify requirements for cleanup of contaminated sediment sites to make the cleanup process more effective. They include:

- Clarifying requirements for cleanup of bioaccumulative chemicals that pose risks to human health and the environment. Examples of such chemicals include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins and mercury.
- Integrating the cleanup requirements in the SMS and Model Toxics Control Act rules. The Model Toxics Control Act is the state's cleanup law, which stems from a voter-approved citizens initiative in 1988.
- Adopting freshwater standards to protect aquatic life that lives in and on sediments.

The proposed changes do not include a revised fish consumption rate for sediment cleanup projects. Ecology heard a number of concerns about identifying a specific rate, including questions about how it could impact a separate process to update water quality standards. After reviewing public comments, Ecology decided to clarify current requirements that specify that site-specific cleanups are designed using a "reasonable maximum exposure" standard. This is based on protecting Washingtonians on the high end of average fish consumption, which in turn will protect all those who eat fish from Washington waters. Ecology is accepting public comments through Oct. 15, 2012. Ecology also will hold several public hearings throughout the state:

- Sept. 26 at 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. at Pacific Market Center, 6100 4th Ave. S., Suite 575, Seattle.
- Sept. 27 at 5:30 p.m. at Whatcom Community College, Heiner Theater, 237 W. Kellogg Road, Bellingham.
- Oct. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Ecology headquarters, 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey.
- Oct. 3 at 5:30 p.m. at CenterPlace Regional Event Center, 2426 N. Discovery Place, Spokane Valley.
- Oct. 4 at 5:30 p.m. at Hampton Inn, 486 Bradley Blvd., Richland.

Ecology staff will be on hand 30 minutes prior to the listed starting times for an open house to talk with interested people. At the listed times, a short staff presentation will begin. That will be followed by a question-and-answer session and then formal testimony. Here's where you can view the proposed rule changes:

- Ecology's headquarters, 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey. Contact Carol Dorn at 360-407-7224 or Carol.Dorn@ecy.wa.gov for an appointment.
- Ecology's Central Regional Office, 15 W. Yakima Ave., Suite 200, Yakima. Call 509-454-7658 for an appointment.
- Ecology's Eastern Regional Office, 4601 N. Monroe, Spokane. Call 509-329-3415 for an appointment.
- Ecology's Northwest Regional Office, 3190 160th Ave. SE, Bellevue. Call 425-649-7190 for an appointment.

Ecology's [Sediment Management Standards webpage](#). Here's how you can submit comments:

- Mail them to Adrienne Dorrah, Washington Department of Ecology, Toxics Cleanup Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600.
- Email them to RuleUpdate@ecy.wa.gov.

Attend a public hearing to provide comments. Ecology will review, consider and respond to all comments. The proposed changes may be modified based on public comments. Ecology expects to adopt the rule in late 2012 or early 2013.