



# Focus

## Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Environmental Update

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### Recent events

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• **Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac) Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement--** The Port of Seattle completed and issued its Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Master Plan Update at Sea-Tac, followed by the Federal Aviation Administration's release of its Record of Decision and Air Conformity determination. The FAA determined that the project will not be considered regionally significant with regard to air pollution emissions, and that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for air quality. The state reaffirmed its certification of the Sea-Tac Airport third runway project. This certification is conditioned to assure that the third runway will be constructed and operated in compliance with applicable air and water quality standards. The conditions of the certification and the status of the environmental permits to be issued by the Department of Ecology (Ecology) are explained in more detail below. Ecology is one of several agencies that reviewed both the environmental impact statement (EIS) and the supplemental EIS for the proposed airport expansion project, and is involved in issuing environmental permits and certifications for the project.

• **Stockpile of fill material --** The Port has begun to stockpile fill needed to build the third runway. Currently, the fill is coming from a permitted sand and gravel mine located in Dupont. The fill is shipped by barge up the Duwamish River and then trucked up SR509 to the airport.

• **Enforcement --** Ecology recently penalized the Port for improperly controlled soil erosion runoff from an employee parking lot under construction north of the airport between South 150th, 24th Avenue South and SR 518. During rainfall events on September 16 and 17, 1997 and again on October 4, 1997 rainfall runoff eroded fill slopes and overwhelmed the erosion and sediment control system in place at that time. Sediment was discharged, causing violation of the water quality standard for turbidity (suspended sediments in water). Ecology fined the Port \$2000 for the September violation and \$9,000 for the second event in October.

### Environmental Standards

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State environmental certification of the airport expansion project is required by the FAA. The certification is a formal commitment by the state to enforce environmental laws and regulations on the project, and sets a standard of performance the state expects the Port to meet as the project proceeds. It does not guarantee environmental permits will be approved.

Conditions of the state environmental certification require the Port to:

1. Obtain and comply with all applicable air and water quality regulations, permits and approvals including the Air Conformity determination required under the Federal Clean Air Act.

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2. Implement stormwater control measures that comply with the requirements in the most current Stormwater Management Manual for the Puget Sound Basin or other equivalent stormwater manuals approved by the Department of Ecology.
3. Establish and implement a process for monitoring construction activities to ensure compliance with applicable air and water standards. Under this condition the Port must:
  - Prepare a new runway construction sediment and erosion plan which adheres to available best management practices (BMPs) and procedures which the Port will attach to the bid packages when seeking contractors to construct the runway;
  - Prepare site-specific sediment and erosion control plans which describe specific BMPs and procedures for individual construction and borrow sties;
  - Implement procedures for addressing changes in plans and construction activities and resolving disagreements on the interpretation of mitigation requirements, permit conditions, and allowable construction activities; and
  - Establish and fund an independent qualified construction pollution control officer to advise on and determine compliance with applicable air and water quality standards.
4. Complete a groundwater evaluation at the airport that will be finalized after review of public comments: This evaluation will:
  - Determine ground water flow characteristics and determining how the contaminants behave and move under the ground;
  - Model groundwater movement to assess potential risks to area drinking water supplies and adjacent surface water bodies; and
  - Conduct additional characterization of groundwater and/or long-term monitoring as necessary.
5. Design and construct the third runway such that the project will not cause changes in the location of the hydrologic divide between Miller and DesMoines Creeks in a manner that alters the average instream flow of either creek. The Port will evaluate the feasibility of constructing an aquifer under the third runway as a means to control stormwater flows and minimize impacts on instream flows. The Port will submit a report to Ecology describing the results of this evaluation.

#### Permit Update

- ❖ **Air Quality Conformity Determination** -- Following extensive reanalysis and modifications to the project, the FAA determined that the project will not result in emissions considered regionally significant with regard to air pollution emissions.

and that it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for air quality. Following internal reviews and coordination with other environmental agencies, Ecology concurred with this determination.

- ❖ **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit** -- Ecology issues an NPDES permit for industrial wastewater and stormwater discharges from Sea-Tac Airport. A draft renewal permit is currently out for public review and comment.. There is a public meeting scheduled for November 3, 1997 and a public hearing scheduled for November 10, 1997. The comment period ends November 10, 1997.
- ❖ **404 Permit** -- This permit is issued by the Army Corps of Engineers and is required for any discharges of fill to waters of the United States. The modification to Miller and DesMoines Creeks and the wetland mitigation for the expansion project are covered by this permit. The Port has proposed to build or restore existing wetlands to compensate for wetlands that will be impacted by the expansion project. As a part of the Permit Ecology will be issuing the 401/CZM Water Quality Certification/Coastal Zone Consistency Determination. The Corps expects to issue the public notice by late November or early December.
- ❖ **401/CZM Water Quality Certification/Coastal Zone Consistency Determination** This certification requires that the Port meet all state conditions for aquatic protection requirements, including meeting water quality standards, providing necessary wetland mitigation, wetland mitigation plans, erosion control, stream bank protection, etc. This certification is not issued until underlying related water quality permits are obtained (e.g. the hydraulic permit from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). The "CZM" or coastal zone management certification requires compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act and with state permits issued for water and air quality and under the federal Clean Air and Clean water Acts.
- ❖ **Ground Water Study** -- The Ecology Agreed Order which provides the framework for this study was issued for public comment in the Summer of '97. The agency responsiveness summary is in progress.
- ❖ **Comprehensive Pollution Prevention Plan**-- The Port submitted this plan to Ecology's Hazardous Waste Toxic Reduction Program in the Fall of '96. The airport has continued to make improvements in overall pollution prevention. For example, the paint shop has made improvements in its operations and recently won an award from the Waste Information Network for reducing their paint and solvent waste.

### **For More Information**

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If you have special accommodation needs, please contact Janet Thompson at Ecology's Northwest Regional Office at (206) 649-7000 (VOICE) or (206) 649-4259 (TDD).