

*Sea-Tac Airport  
Ground Water Study*

*Public Participation Plan*

**Prepared By:**

The Washington Department of Ecology  
The Port of Seattle

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Overview

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the Port of Seattle (the Port), operator of Sea-Tac International Airport, are prepared to enter into a voluntary Agreed Order under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, Washington's hazardous waste cleanup law). The Agreed Order is a formal legal agreement which, in this case, calls for the Port to perform two main tasks at the Airport:

- ◆ A comprehensive ground water study
- ◆ Pollution prevention activities for Airport fuel systems

Over the years, jet fuel and other petroleum products have been released to the environment at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. These substances were released in the Aircraft Operations and Maintenance Area (AOMA, see map in Appendix A) primarily from underground storage tanks, fuel distribution piping systems and, to a lesser degree, due to aircraft maintenance activities. As a result of these historic releases, the soil and ground water beneath some portions of the AOMA are now contaminated.

Thirteen separate areas within the 1/2-square-mile (320 acres) AOMA are currently known to have ground water and/or significant soil contamination. The primary contaminant in these areas is jet fuel. Other contaminants, such as gasoline, industrial solvents, mineral spirits, lubricating oil and aircraft deicing fluids, have also been found, but in much smaller amounts. The jet fuel and other substances released at the Airport are considered hazardous substances under Washington's hazardous waste cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, chapter 70.105D, Revised Code of Washington). Environmental studies and/or cleanup activities are underway or are complete at all known contaminated areas at the Airport.

Much is already known about the ground water and the contamination beneath the AOMA. The known contamination appears to be localized and does not appear to threaten public water supplies or area surface water bodies. However, in order to confirm that the contamination is not a threat, now or in the future, a more comprehensive understanding of the ground water beneath the Airport is appropriate.

### *Ground Water Study*

The ground water study will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will include developing a computer model of ground water flow throughout the Airport and additional modeling focused on the movement of the ground water and the contamination beneath the AOMA. The computer modeling will help identify the potential risk of the

contamination in ground water reaching public and private drinking water supply wells and nearby surface water bodies: Bow Lake, Des Moines Creek, and Miller Creek.

The second phase of the study will be described in an addendum to the Agreed Order and will include work needed to complete additional investigation activities. These Phase II activities will include drilling additional groundwater monitoring wells that could be used to verify Phase I results and to perform additional groundwater monitoring and/or investigation work.

The findings from the ground water study will be published in a report. Information from the study may be used by the parties conducting cleanups at the Airport and could provide a basis for a consistent approach to cleanup actions within the AOMA.

The ground water study is one condition the Port must meet to maintain state environmental certification of the Airport expansion project.

### *Pollution Prevention*

The pollution prevention activities outlined in the Agreed Order are intended to enhance current pollution prevention practices at Airport underground storage tank and pipeline facilities by using a strategy of evaluating, implementing and monitoring measures that could be taken to prevent future releases of contamination to soil and ground water. These activities will be conducted by both Ecology and the Port.

The actions outlined in the Agreed Order include:

- ◆ Working with the owners and operators of Airport fueling facilities to improve leak detection and leak prevention measures. Such measures could include: tank tightness testing, pipeline tightness testing, internal tank inspection, corrosion protection, fuel inventory control procedures, installation of automatic tank gauging equipment, continuous pressure monitoring and best management practices.
- ◆ Inspecting all underground storage tank (UST) systems at the Airport for compliance with Washington's Underground Storage Tank Regulations.
- ◆ Creating a database of all UST systems at the Airport. This database will be updated annually using information provided by owners and operators of Airport fueling facilities.
- ◆ Annual reporting to Ecology on the status of all UST systems at the Airport.

## The Model Toxics Control Act and Public Participation Commitment

MTCA places significant emphasis on public participation throughout the formal cleanup process. Neighboring residents, businesses and other interested parties are given the opportunity to become involved in cleanup decisions. The regulation requires "the early planning and development of a site specific public participation plan." The plan includes publishing public notices announcing the availability of reports and studies for the site, conducting public comment periods and may also include holding public meetings and hearings. Besides these basic public participation requirements, the law calls for flexibility and creativity in tailoring additional activities appropriate to each affected community. Such activities may include interviews with community members, public workshops and working with existing community groups to "get the word out."

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) section 173-340-600 includes the public participation provisions for MTCA. In addition, WAC 173-340-530 (6) includes a provision for appropriate public participation opportunities when an Agreed Order is in place.

*This plan describes public participation activities for the Agreed Order for ground water evaluation and pollution prevention activities at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.*

This plan includes required public participation activities specified in WAC section 173-340-600 as well as additional activities intended to encourage informed citizen participation in the Agreed Order.

### Participants in this Plan

The Port has been identified by Ecology as the potentially liable person (PLP) for the groundwater study. The Port and Ecology are entering a legal agreement called an Agreed Order which outlines the work required of the Port and describes how Ecology and the Port will work together. Ecology's role is to oversee the Port's work to ensure that the requirements of the Agreed Order and the Model Toxics Control Act are met and to ensure that the public participation activities detailed in this plan are carried out. The Port's role is to carry out the tasks specified in the Agreed Order and to assist as needed in public participation activities.

Ecology and the Port have agreed to work in an open, cooperative and coordinated fashion on public participation activities. Each participant shares a common goal of fostering a well-informed public with a clear understanding of the ground water study and its relationship to other activities at the Airport.

## **Goal of this Public Participation Plan**

MTCA states that public participation plans are intended to encourage a coordinated and effective public involvement tailored to the public's needs at a particular facility.

In addition to this, a primary goal of this plan is to promote public understanding of the Agreed Order and ground water study and pollution prevention activities at the Airport so that the public can provide meaningful comments on the project.

Some objectives of this plan are:

- ◆ To identify people and organizations with an interest or potential interest in the ground water study and pollution prevention processes and findings.
- ◆ To identify community concerns related to the ground water study and ways to address those concerns.
- ◆ To design and conduct public involvement activities that are appropriate and meaningful to the local and surrounding communities.
- ◆ To promote public understanding of the Agreed Order and ground water study process and findings.
- ◆ To aid communication and to encourage interaction and collaboration among Ecology, the Port and the community.
- ◆ To meet the Model Toxics Control Act public participation requirements [WACs 173-340-530 (6) and 173-340-600].

## **2.0 The Public Participation Process at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport**

MTCA calls for public participation at important milestones in the investigation and cleanup process. The public must be provided an opportunity to comment before Ecology can give final approval for most key decisions. For this project, formal public notice and a comment period have been conducted for the scope of work for the ground water study and pollution prevention actions in the Agreed Order. Additional public notice and another comment period will be conducted for the report containing the results of the study and for any additional activities that result from the study.

This Public Participation Plan describes only the activities planned and required for the phased scope of work described in the Agreed Order and the final ground water study

report. Public participation activities for any additional phases will be identified later through an amendment to this Plan or through the development of a new Plan.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

In accordance with MTCA requirements, Ecology retains overall responsibility and approval authority for public participation activities for this project. Ecology, with assistance from the Port, will conduct activities related to formal public notice and comment periods, including soliciting, receiving and considering comments, making final decisions, and preparing responsiveness summaries. The Port, with Ecology's review and approval, may elect to conduct additional, informal activities such as placing project updates in existing Airport newsletters or in surrounding cities' newsletters.

All public participation activities relating to the ground water study and pollution prevention activities must be coordinated through Ecology. Both Ecology and the Port will allow each other adequate advance review time for any materials to be circulated related to this project and will notify each other in advance of any planned public appearances related to this project and immediately following any media contacts related to this project.

## **Points of Contact**

The following people will be the primary points of contact for the general public and media and for coordinating project-related public participation activities:

### **Ecology:**

Christine Corrigan  
Public Involvement  
Toxics Cleanup Program  
Department of Ecology  
3190 160th Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452  
(425) 649-7254

### **Port of Seattle:**

Rachel Garson  
Community Relations Manager  
Public Affairs  
Seattle Tacoma International Airport  
P.O. Box 68727  
Seattle, WA 98168  
(206) 248-6851

## **Required Activities**

The required public participation activities for this project are as follows. Ecology is the lead for these activities; the Port will assist as needed:

1. A **30-day public comment period** for the Agreed Order was held from **May 14 to June 13, 1997**. A second 30-day public comment period will occur after the report on the results of Phase I activities and the Addendum to the Agreed Order describing proposed Phase II activities are complete.

2. Formal public notice for the comment periods will include the following:
- a) A mailed fact sheet summarizing the Agreed Order and related activities and inviting the public to comment. This fact sheet will be mailed to individuals on a mailing list developed jointly by Ecology and the Port (see description below). This list will include, but will not be limited to the "potentially affected vicinity" including adjacent property owners as well as individuals that request to be placed on the list. As of the printing of this plan, the mailing list includes more than 17,000 people.
  - b) Display advertisements announcing the comment period will be placed in the following newspapers: *The Seattle Times South Edition*, the *Highline News* and the *South County Journal*.
  - c) A notice will be published in Ecology's Site Register.

Supporting tasks related to the above-required activities include:

#### *Mailing List*

Ecology and the Port will work together to compile and maintain a comprehensive mailing list for the project. The list will include at a minimum, adjacent property owners, individuals, groups, public agencies, elected officials and private firms with a known interest in the airport, appropriate media, as well as anyone who requests to receive project-related mailings. The list will be maintained by the Port with a current copy provided to Ecology as requested. This list will be updated as needed by the Port with Ecology's assistance.

#### *Public Meetings and Workshops*

*A public meeting was held on May 21, 1997, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Burien Library to answer questions and receive oral comments on the Agreed Order.*

In addition, Ecology and the Port will conduct a public meeting/workshop after the report on the results of Phase I activities and the Addendum to the Agreed Order describing proposed Phase II activities are complete.

For public meetings during comment periods, Ecology will schedule an appropriate time and secure a meeting place. Ecology will provide public notice of the meeting and provide a record or transcript of the formal comments made at required meetings/hearings. Ecology will provide the record or transcripts to the Port. If necessary, the Port will cooperate with Ecology and assist by providing descriptive materials and personnel as needed for required public meetings. When such assistance is needed, Ecology will give the Port advance notice in order to schedule and prepare



for the meeting. For other meetings that are not required under MTCA, the Port, with Ecology oversight and approval, will take the lead in planning and coordinating meeting logistics.

### ***Information Repositories***

Information repositories will be established for the public to access documents pertaining to project activities. Information placed at the repositories will include all project-related documents requiring a comment period (the Agreed Order, for example) and any background information that may be relevant or necessary to adequately review such documents. Other information may include validated laboratory results, status reports, interim reports, fact sheets and newsletters. The following are the repositories for the Sea-Tac Airport groundwater study project:

Department of Ecology  
Northwest Regional Office  
3190 160th Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452  
Attn: Sally Perkins  
(425) 649-7190

Sea-Tac Airport  
3rd Floor, Room 301

Burien Library  
14700 6th Southwest  
Burien, WA

Des Moines Library  
21620 11th South  
Des Moines, WA

Valley View Library  
17850 Military Road South  
SeaTac, WA

### ***Responsiveness Summaries***

Comments received during the public comment periods will be retained in the Sea-Tac Airport files at Ecology with copies provided to the Port. Responses to comments received during the public comment periods will be compiled in a responsiveness summary prepared by Ecology. A draft responsiveness summary will be provided to the Port for review and comment. Ecology may modify the responsiveness summary based on the Port's comments. The final responsiveness summary will be sent to those who submitted written and/or oral comments and to the information repositories. Notice of the availability of the summary will be printed in Ecology's Site Register.

### ***Additional Activities***

Ecology or the Port may elect to undertake additional activities not required by MTCA for this project if deemed appropriate and agreed to by all parties.

The following are additional activities that are currently scheduled for this project:

- Project updates will be published in Sea-Tac Forum, the Airport's newsletter.
- At least one workshop/open house will be held at the conclusion of Phase II activities of the ground water study.
- Informal briefings about the ground water study will be made to local area municipalities upon request.
- Ecology will provide notice of the public comment period and any project related public meetings, hearings, open houses or workshops on Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program homepage on the Internet. In addition, when possible, documents relating to the project will be made available on the Toxics Cleanup Program's homepage.

The following activities may be undertaken by either Ecology or the Port at appropriate points during the course of the project:

- **Media releases** may be issued to the local newspapers, radio, and TV stations.
- **Public notices** may be posted at the information repositories, in the vicinity of the airport, or any other location appropriate to the interests and needs of the citizens in the airport area.

All additional public participation activities beyond those required by MTCA must be coordinated with the required public notice activities. This means that any party choosing to undertake such activities will notify the other parties in advance and will provide an opportunity to review and comment on any materials before they are made public. Ecology maintains review and approval authority over all additional public involvement activities.

Ecology and the Port will each maintain regular contact with interested community groups and individuals and agree to share information gained from these contacts with each other.

### **Updates to the Public Participation Plan**

This plan will be updated when and if additional phases of the project take place as formal actions.

## 3.0 Community Profile

### Community Background

Sea-Tac Airport, operated by the Port of Seattle, is the international air transportation hub of Washington State and the northwestern area of the United States and serves as the primary commercial airport for the Pacific Northwest. In 1996, 24.6 million passengers used Sea-Tac and 388,000 metric tons of cargo was shipped through Sea-Tac. There are about 1,200 flights per day in and out of Sea-Tac.

The Airport handles about \$5 billion in two-way trade each year. The Port facility, its airline tenants and concessionaires employ 17,000 people at the Airport and indirectly about 20,000 more off-site at Airport-related businesses such as hotels and car rental companies. It also supports the state's growing tourism business.

Sea-Tac Airport is located entirely inside the city limits of SeaTac. The Airport encompasses over 2,500 acres. Other cities adjacent to the City of SeaTac are Des Moines, Tukwila, Burien and some parts of unincorporated King County.

The areas built up in this area are just under 50% residential, 17% open space or agricultural, 12.6% commercial or industrial, 11% airports (Sea-Tac and Boeing Field) and 10% other uses.

### Community Concerns

The Port of Seattle has a long history of working and communicating with surrounding communities on issues related to Airport operations. Through these continuing relationships with the local communities, the Port has a good understanding of community concerns and issues.

The communities surrounding the airport have had long-standing concerns about aircraft noise, air pollution, contamination of groundwater and streams near the airport, and other issues related to airport operations and construction. The primary current issue of interest in the community is the proposed expansion of the Airport, specifically the addition of a third runway. There are a wide variety of concerns about the third runway, some of which are related to perceived environmental impacts. The residents in the immediate areas around the Airport receive the greatest impacts from the airport.

There has been particular concern expressed about Airport surface water management. Several legal actions have been filed against the Port on water drainage issues and either have been settled or are awaiting disposition.

Concerns about ground water have been voiced, especially as they relate to the potential for contamination to impact drinking water. Data now available indicate that such a potential is small. The ground water study is being conducted to increase the level of certainty about these concerns.

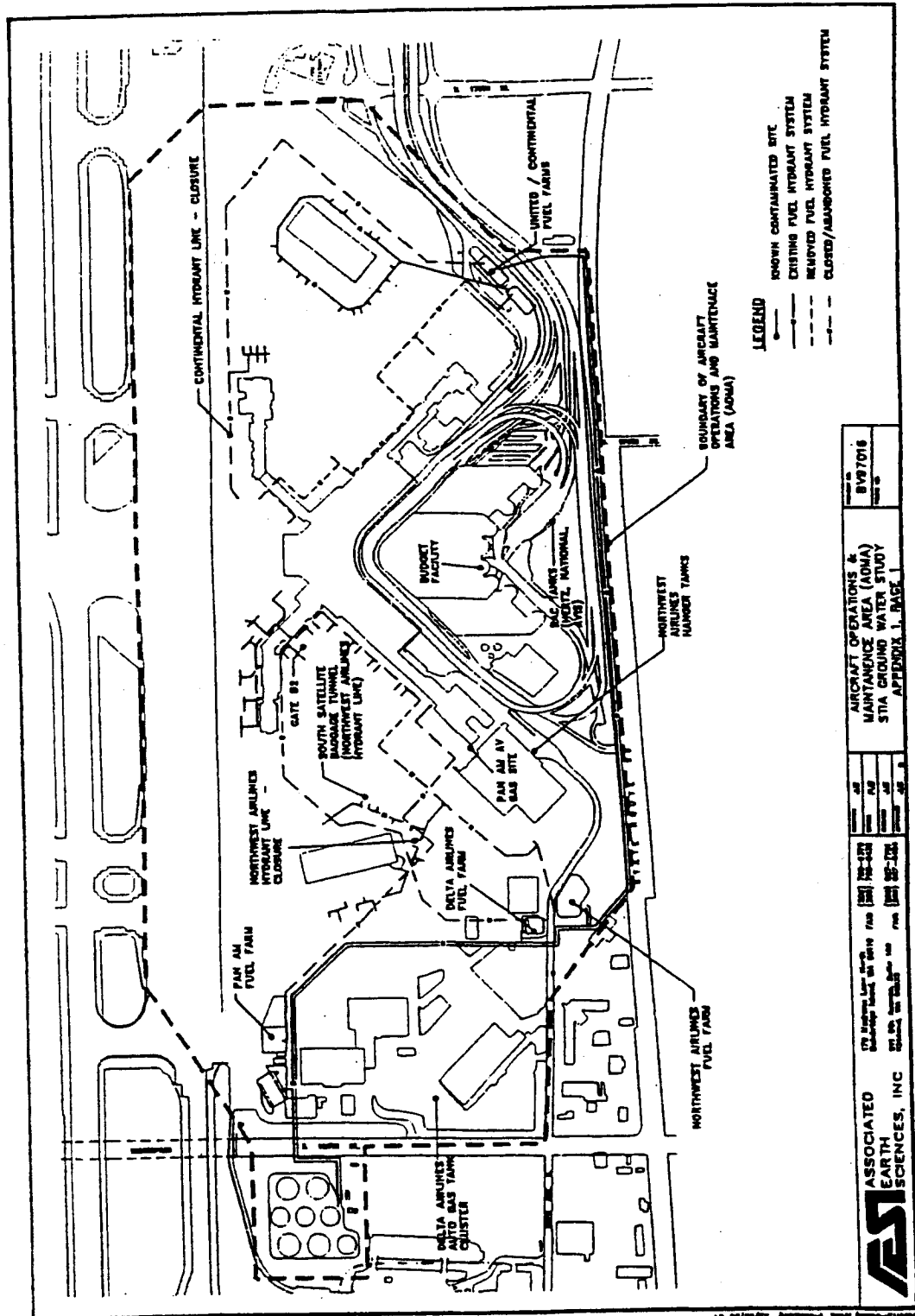
During community interviews, a number of people (more than 10) indicated an interest in learning about how the Agreed Order and ground water study will impact decisions related to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting process.

The cities around the Airport have expressed concern about Airport growth and its impacts and have formed a coalition, called the Airport Communities Coalition (ACC) to oppose the third runway. The coalition includes Burien, Des Moines, Tukwila, Normandy Park, Federal Way, and the Highline School District. The ACC filed suit against the Port of Seattle and the Puget Sound Regional Council after each approved in 1996 the addition of a third runway at Sea-Tac. The suit contends that the environmental impact statement for the Airport Master Plan that includes the new runway is inadequate. The ACC also alleges that the Port and the Puget Sound Regional Council violated the state's Growth Management Act when they approved the new runway.

In addition to ACC, the formal coalition of cities against the third runway, there are several grass roots groups that oppose expansion of the Airport and also work on environmental issues related to airport operations.

Appendix A

Map of the AOMA



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*Appendix B*

**Community Groups**

<b>Airport Communities Coalition (ACC)</b>	<b>Regional Commission on Airport Affairs</b>
City of Des Moines	(RCAA)
21630 11th Avenue South	19900 4th Avenue Southwest
Des Moines, WA 98198	Normandy Park, WA 98166

**Citizens Against Sea-Tac Expansion (CASE)**  
31500 1st Avenue South #14-103  
Federal Way, WA 98003