

[The following testimony is a transcription of oral testimony recorded on November 13, 2017, at the webinar hearing for proposed Chapter 173-228 WAC – Vessel Sewage No Discharge Zone. The testimony was transcribed by Dept. of Ecology staff. The original audio file of this testimony is part of the rule file (Administrative Order #17-02).]

**Mindy Roberts:**

My name is Mindy Roberts, and I lead the Puget Sound Program at the Washington Environmental Council. We will be submitting written comments as well, but I just wanted to share today, at the hearing, that I'm a fortunate person to be able to forage food from the intertidal areas of Puget Sound and I soundly support establishing a No Discharge Zone.

Not surprising to all of you, Ecology spent many years considering a No Discharge Zone. The good news is that today over 97% of boaters already comply with the No Discharge Zone. So, they store blackwater onboard and then use stationary and mobile pumpouts to properly dispose of their waste where it can be treated.

Commercial and recreational vessels represent the final pollution source to Puget Sound that lacks a regulatory approach, so other sources, like stormwater runoff from urban and rural land, failing septic systems, combined sewer overflows, and municipal wastewater, each of these already has in place a plan to control, to control these sources to reduce and eliminate contamination.

Vessel sewage, whether it's raw or partial, does contain high concentrations of bacteria and other pathogens that, even in very small amounts, can travel miles and miles away in Puget Sound because our waters are so connected. And Ecology's own Water Quality studies indicated these high concentrations can occur within sensitive areas even when vessels discharge over three miles away.

Earlier, folks mentioned marine sanitation devices. Unfortunately those just don't achieve enough kill of the microorganisms in order to protect public health. So, we're concerned because each year shellfish beds have to be closed down in Puget Sound due to bacterial contamination so we'd like to see this practice followed by everyone.

Frankly, our experience is that the boating community really values Puget Sound and we are confident that the remaining vessels and companies that need to install tanks will step up and do their part to protect Puget Sound.

Thank you.