

# The Lands Council

Please see file uploaded. Thank you very much.



To Whom It May Concern:

The following comments are submitted on behalf of The Lands Council (TLC). TLC is a Spokane-based non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve and revitalize Inland NW forests, water, and wildlife through education, advocacy, effective action, and community engagement. We collaborate with a broad range of interested parties to seek smart and mutually-respectful solutions to environment and health issues. We have been a recipient of Public Participation Grant (PPG) funding since 2003 for our work to educate homeless, low-income, and ethnic communities on the public health risks of toxics in the Spokane River.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Ecology's rulemaking to amend Chapter 173-321 WAC, Public Participation Grants. We applaud Ecology's adoption of specific recommendations from the 2016 independent audit in an effort to streamline applicant eligibility, establishment of priorities, evaluation criteria, and program implementation. TLC is in agreement with the proposed changes. We are especially in favor of Ecology's commitment to environmental justice issues in giving priority consideration for grant funding to "applicants who facilitate public participation in highly impacted or low-income communities" rather than "applicants that demonstrate the ability to provide accurate technical information on complex waste management issues." TLC encourages Ecology to keep the Spokane River on its priority list in order that continued efforts may be made to "facilitate public participation in the investigation and remediation of a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance and to implement the state's solid and hazardous waste management priorities."

TLC looks forward to Ecology's adoption of these changes in its upcoming grant application period for the 2017-19 biennium. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Kat Hall  
Conservation & Education Director