

Melissa Malott

Hi Kerry,

I've been meaning to get this email out to you earlier this week, but have just been swamped.

I want to share that I was disappointed in that hearing last week – I'm worried that it suppressed public comment.

We have heard some incredibly negative comments about the hearing last week – people think Ecology doesn't want public comment. While I've shared with people that I don't believe that was the intent, I can understand why people feel that way.

If my recollection is correct, about twice as many people came to the hearing as the RI hearing, but fewer people commented. I think this is because of how the hearing was structured, from the Q & A session not being recorded, to the short time available for public comment, to the way the public gave comments (facing away from crowd, with no mic).

Several people thought the Q & A comments were recorded, since you'd stated that their answers would be responded to in the responsiveness memo. Also, many people left after stating questions during Q & A because they thought they'd registered comments. I realize you said that wasn't the case, but when people's minds are spinning, and there is contradictory information, it can be confusing.

I have tried to track down some of the people who spoke during Q & A and then left, to encourage them to submit comments. I've found some of them, but this is difficult, as not everyone signed in.

Finally, answering people's questions by referring them to inaccessible technical documents is not helpful. It only furthers the perception that Ecology isn't interested in what the public thinks. Those documents are extremely difficult to understand and, as stated in my own testimony, misleading. We can't expect the general public to be able to understand them. CHB is doing our best to get information out there, but it's difficult for even us to understand this.

To help address the confusion and encourage public comment, CHB is putting together a public forum on Oxy on April 5 with a panel of experts. We'll be sending the email pasted below covering our take on the hearing last week, and announcing the forum. I am sharing this as an FYI with you. If you are interested in attending, please let me know.

I'm sorry to be negative, but this was frustrating. I know you want good public participation in this process; if I didn't think so, I wouldn't bother with communicating this. Let's talk before the next public hearing about how to structure it so as to maximize public participation.

Thank you,

Melissa

Hello all,

First, a huge thank you to everybody that made it to the March 8th public hearing for the Occidental Chemical Superfund cleanup!

Over a hundred people attended, which is twice as many as the last hearing in the cleanup process. The movement to clean the worst pollution in Commencement Bay is growing, and it's thanks to you!

Unfortunately, we were less than impressed with how the hearing was run by Ecology. Between the technically dense presentations, the unrecorded Q&A session and the mere 20 minutes left for public comment at the end of the night, the hearing did little to encourage public participation. If you left with more questions than you started with, you're not alone.

To help clear some things up, Citizens for a Healthy Bay will be hosting a public forum on the Occidental Chemical Superfund cleanup April 5th, 6:30-8:30pm at the University of Washington Tacoma campus.

We will learn from a panel of experts about the Occidental Chemical pollution plume, the risk it poses to our community and environment, and what we need to do to ensure an adequate cleanup. There will also be a question and answer session so that you can get your specific concerns addressed.

What: Public Forum on Occidental Chemical Pollution Cleanup

When: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, April 5th

Where: UW Tacoma Campus, room KEY 102 of the Keystone Building

Facebook: <http://bit.ly/2n419fE>

This Public Forum will be an important opportunity to learn the facts before you submit your public comments, which are due April 27th. If we don't comment to show Ecology our support for a full cleanup, we won't get one! See the attached fact sheet and comment template for more info.

As always, please reach out to me if you have any questions.