

Maude Laslie

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Occidental Chemical Superfund cleanup, the worst contamination left in Commencement Bay.

My name is Maude Laslie and I live in northeast Tacoma near Browns Point Lighthouse, Commencement Bay and the Hylebos Waterway. I am a lifelong advocate for the environment and for corporate responsibility when corporate activity has a deleterious impact on the natural world. I am deeply concerned about toxic contamination from the Occidental Chemical Corporation and its potential to further and irreparably degrade the marine and plant environment of Commencement Bay and the Hylebos Waterway.

Part of what I love about Tacoma is its story of moving from a historical legacy of industrial pollution to a community with a revitalized connection to its waters. Visitors from other communities are often surprised at the level of community activities available along Tacoma's waterfront, and at our commitment to making the area a clean and sustainable community resource. Our commitment to Commencement Bay, including the Hylebos Waterway, is a source of pride for both myself and the larger community. The area affected by Occidental Chemical Corporation pollution deserves a full and long-lasting cleanup.

The contamination from Occidental is staggering. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of toxic, cancer-causing chemicals are spread under the site, the Hylebos Waterway, and potentially Commencement Bay. The pollution is so bad, it actually dissolves rock into jelly. It is unthinkable what this level of pollution is doing to the plants and animals in the area—including humans.

In order to cut costs, Occidental Chemical Corporation is setting the stage to be able to walk away from this mess without a comprehensive cleanup. Occidental is proposing a cleanup plan that would leave nearly two thirds of their pollution in the ground – highly toxic pollution right underneath a vulnerable aquatic ecosystem.

This is absolutely not acceptable - this is not acceptable for me, for my family, for my community, or for my environment. Tacoma deserves more and Occidental Chemical Corporation should not be allowed to walk away from the mess they have made.

Occidental must be held accountable for the strongest and quickest cleanup possible. I urge Ecology to choose a cleanup plan that removes as much toxic pollution as possible, as soon as possible. Further, Occidental must create a performance bond, reserve account or an equivalent fund to ensure that cleanup costs will be covered regardless of the company's future financial status. Ecology has the authority to order this via a unilateral order.

Occidental should not be allowed to argue that it's too big of a mess for them to clean up – they created it and they should clean it up. For the safety of our environment, Ecology needs to hold them fully accountable for a real cleanup to the "maximum extent practicable" as required by the Model Toxics Control Act. What Occidental is proposing is unacceptable. We cannot allow the profits of polluters to outweigh the importance of environmental protection.

Sincerely,

Maude A. Laslie

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