

Gerry O'Keefe

Thanks. My name is Gerry O'Keefe. I'm the Senior Director of Environmental Affairs for the Washington Public Ports Association. We represent the 75 Port Districts around the state of Washington. Our principle mission is developing property and creating jobs in local communities and we're very proud of it. We've got a lot of experience cleaning up contaminated lands. We work with Ecology extensively to do that all over. The record is of, you know, achievement not only protecting the environment but also the economic benefits that come from cleaning up property and making it usable again are really profound. It's not just something that ports have done. Other local governments have been engaged in it; other parties are engaged in it as well. But it's an extraordinary thing to see happen.

Because of that experience, we're scratching our head about this particular proposal or alternative. Our understanding based on the work that, you know our experience, is that when a landowner doesn't support an alternative, the alternative isn't viable. In fact, what Ecology will mostly come to us and say is, "Have you worked with the landowner and made sure they're ok?" before you take this out to public comment. So from you know our perspective, just as a practical matter, you can't take action on this site until the Port says they're ready to take action on this site. And, you know, International paper might not like that, but you can't force the project that the Port isn't comfortable with on them. There's a million ways that they can keep it from happening, so we'd just encourage you know Ecology to take a good look at what the Port has proposed. It's a reasonable proposal, we think it addresses the problems that need to be addressed, and moreover they like it – which is a big deal. Thank you very much.