

In Response to the Public Comment Period for the Perma-Fix Northwest SEPA EIS Scoping

I attended the public meeting on March 13, and providing this comment on what I see not only as someone with 27 years in this business working with regulatory agencies in 9 different states, but also as a local taxpayer and as a concerned citizen of the Tri Cities.

In the world outside this area, 5 years would be unheard of as a delay for permit renewal for a TSDF, but somehow you are more than double that number? I would respectfully ask you to question if there really are serious technical differences that need to be overcome? I believe the permitting process is well defined on both a federal and state level and I would hope an expeditious solution to this could be reached.

My second comment pertains to the tank waste you mentioned in your slide show. One person in the audience asked for the definition of tank waste. I too would like to understand this definition. My point directly is this...If a company accepts a waste which fails LDR for a regulated constituent, and is permitted to accept and treat that waste to meet the LDR standards and then send that waste for landfill, why do you care where the waste comes from? If Perma-Fix wanted to accept waste from Joes Waste shack that met all the criteria and was treated and landfilled and all operations were safe and compliant, would you care? I would hope not because I believe the company is doing this very practice every day.

I also believe the SEPA process is a useful tool to evaluate the impacts of operations at PFNW, however as evidenced during the March 13th meeting, both Perma-Fix and other meeting attendees are asking for Ecology to include what Perma-Fix foresees as their future business (which includes treating up to 3,000,000 gallons of liquid mixed low-level waste). How can you, as a regulatory agency whose job it is to enforce the regulations, prevent or delay Perma-Fix from at least evaluating the impacts of their proposed actions? If the evaluation through the SEPA process shows that 3,000,000 gallons poses an impact, those impacts will have to be mitigated. You can't know the impacts until they are evaluated. It is irresponsible for Ecology to prevent or delay this evaluation, and hinder Perma-Fix from growing or changing their business. Perma-Fix has a waste acceptance process bounded by their dangerous waste permit, which would not allow them to accept any waste that does not meet their waste acceptance criteria. By including the 3,000,000 gallons of liquid mixed low-level waste in the SEPA evaluation you would not be giving any authorization for Perma-Fix to accept a waste stream not allowed in accordance with their permit. Given this, Ecology should include the volume of waste Perma-Fix is requesting to be included in the scope of the SEIS so the impacts, if any, can be evaluated in a timely manner.