

Internal Notetaking Template for Stakeholder Public Engagement Period



Stakeholder Group Name: Daniel Sears, Columbia River Keeper

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Format (Virtual/In-person): Virtual

[00:59:50] Daniel Sears: Thank you. My name is Dan Sears, and I'm the conservation director for Columbia River Keeper. Can you hear me okay?

Great. Thank you. One of the first things I want to say is we're a part of the Alliance for Community Engagement in Vancouver, and we appreciate and strongly support the inclusion of Vancouver as one of the communities that's overburdened by air pollution. There are a number of factors in Vancouver that contribute to a situation where people are experiencing very diminished air quality, particularly in the summertime or in periods of air inversions.

It has a big impact on the communities we work in, so thank you for identifying that at the outset on the map. That's part of the reason I asked the question earlier about out-of-state pollution sources is Portland certainly contributes significantly to Vancouver's diminished air quality. Distributing additional air quality monitoring resources in Vancouver could really help to distinguish what steps could be taken within the community there and what steps need to be taken across the river where I live in Oregon to do more.

Likewise looking a little bit further upstream, there is a cluster of gas plants in the Umatilla area that contribute a lot of VOCs into an area that's already experiencing very high levels of ozone and it's an area with a large Latino population and it's an area with significant tribal population and people work outside in the area as well. There's farm worker housing and so I appreciate that the overburdened community identification process is looking at the Columbia Basin and what would encourage you to look at it as a whole and looking at that ozone problem in particular in the area around the Tri-cities, Umatilla, that whole Plymouth, that whole--

That expanse of agricultural and fossil fuel power plant industrial areas is really having an impact on the air quality and I think it's pretty evident as people drive through, certainly as I travel up to that part of the state, I note every time as I go through there's a real change in air quality as I move through that corner by Plymouth seems like it's really often impacted by poor air quality in the winter and that's exacerbated in the summer as well with the smoke issues.

The last thing I wanted to just identify was concern about whether this exercise was going to be able to identify all the communities that would benefit from additional air quality monitoring resources and the Longview Kelso area is one spot that jumped out to us as a potential gap. The Department of Oncology was involved in the development of a health impact assessment in 2018 and 2019, I think, regarding a very large coal export facility that was proposed.

Through that process, the Department of Ecology came to understand and acknowledge that there were elevated levels of respiratory illness in the community, in Longview, in Kelso. That additional air quality monitoring would be a benefit to community potentially to understand the distribution of pollutants in the area, criteria pollutants, but also toxic pollutants. If you look at the Washington Environmental Health Disparities map, Longview does pop out a little bit in terms of having increased exposure to toxic air pollution as well as criteria air pollution.

I think that you asked the question earlier, do we see a place that should be on the map that we're concerned about? I think the Longview Kelso area is one that I would encourage you to look a little more closely into, though it may not meet every community indicator that you've established. It seems on an intuitive level that it raises pretty significant concerns and that health impact assessment in 2018. I think it should be available to you and I'll try to make sure I include it in our written comments. With that, I just appreciate the overview and your

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work in trying to identify overburdened communities who are experiencing really significant air pollution issues. It's a major problem that is impacting the people we work with all across the Columbia River Basin.

From far upstream, all the way down to the mouth of the Columbia River, air quality is an issue that's really shaping how communities experience the outdoor environment where they work and live. Thank you.