

Lou Stone

Should we continue to issue permits to businesses and agencies that give them permission to spread sewage sludge on farmland and forest land?

NO!

Seriously? The public has to fight the WA State DOEcology to implement public health and related science? Again? WTF is wrong with you scientists at DOE?: In many other such battles around Washington, "Biosolids" (the marketing name for the sewage sludge) is heavily pushed by Ecology as free fertilizer for farmers, and compost for gardeners. Read the labels of what you buy in the gardening stores. Ecology says "the draft permit streamlines some requirements, reducing the regulatory burden for the [biosolids industry] in the state." This matches the complaint expressed (at a public meeting) by one of the officers of FMF that "there is too much paper work" while submitting blatantly inadequate and incorrect boiler plate for the required environmental analysis of the proposed Lincoln County site that was to be sludged.

Of course none of this matters to the Department of Ecology, which is in the grip of the waste and other polluting industries. Ecology staff is very aggressive in pursuit of their "partnership" (Ecology caseworker's term) with one of the state's main wholesalers of sludge, Fire Mountain Farms. FMF has been repeatedly slapped on the wrist by its partner, Ecology, for code violations like storing chemical wastes in the same piles of "biosolids" that it land spreads around the state. FMF intentionally created a "mixed" product to spread on agricultural fields that sometimes was comprised of as much as 15% of listed hazardous waste. A search of Ecology documents by Yelm-based Preserve the Commons found that much of it was flammable with large quantities of paint thinner.

My main concern with a five-year re-authorization of how the Department of Ecology manages the program of land application of sewage sludge is that the material is host to an unknown amount of contaminants which constantly go down the drain in municipalities. They only test for nine heavy metals, nitrogen and selected pathogens. Unexamined are the many chemicals, micro-plastics, pharmaceuticals, and the infamous alphabet soup of ubiquitous super toxins now headed by PFAS (Per- and PolyFluoroAlkyl Substances).

END permits and revoke existing permits to businesses and agencies that give them permission to spread sewage sludge on farmland and forest land!