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Board of Clallam County Commissioners

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TODD MIELKE, County Administrator

July 29, 2025

Marian Abbett, Site Manager
WA Department of Ecology
P O Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775

Re: Port Angeles Rayonier Mill Public Comment

Marian Abbett:

First, we want to thank you for your outreach to the public on this very important subject to our community. The following comments from the County Commissioners relate to Ecology's proposed interim action clean-up program for the Rayonier site.

We totally agree with your statement in this plan that "Rayonier must clean it up to the highest safety standards called unrestricted land use levels. This would allow for a variety of future uses." Unfortunately, your preferred plan SL-3 does not meet this goal. A five to seven-foot cap over ten acres of contaminated soil will preclude some future uses of the site and/or require the removal of the cap. We also believe that the estimated cost for this alternative is undervalued, and in addition, this alternative is more complex than our preferred alternative. Although more costly, we believe the alternative SL-5 with the removal of all the contaminated soil to a safe site is the only alternative that meets your above-mentioned goal. This alternative will provide the greatest benefit and is the only permanent environmental remedy for the Rayonier site. The cost/benefit ratio might have been skewed simply due to underestimation of the costs in SL-3 which and although more costly, the greatest benefit will always be the removal of the contaminated soil from this site under option SL-5.

A second issue is that the estimate of a seven-to-ten-year time horizon to clean up the site gives us concern. The fact that it has taken decades to even reach the current state of clean-up causes us to question the certainty of this forecast. A shorter required time to reach a satisfactory clean-up will allow the development of the site into the appropriate future use. Time does matter.

Since the proposed clean-up process will take years under any scenario, we also believe that there should be priority given to Ennis Creek, its estuary, and the riparian areas around the stream. The salmon and steelhead need help immediately, and we believe this should be the FIRST priority for cleanup---restore Ennis Creek for all riparian dependent species as rapidly as possible.

Finally, we also ask that Ecology continue to communicate closely with Rayonier (RYAM) given their recent corporate financial record. This will take close coordination with all parties to ensure that this project is completed in an expeditious manner.
Again, thank you for reaching out to all of us.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Mike French, Chair


Randy Johnson


Mark Ozias