

Carolita McGee

CLEANUP NOT COVERUP

I support the City of Port Angeles and many other governmental entities, nonprofit organizations and individuals for almost every comment submitted to the State Department of Ecology during the last comment period — in 2019 — that Rayonier must be required to remove ALL contaminants from its former mill site. For the latest report Ecology officially released about five years later — June 12, 2025 — Ecology has moved its preferred cleanup level only from Level 2 to 3, out of 5. Level 5 is the only alternative that would excavate ALL contaminants and move them to a landfill, like one in eastern Oregon, where they can be safely contained.

Covering contaminants with fabric and soil and letting Rayonier check for leaks is not adequate protection against exposure to toxic wastes that can harm health, including cancer risks. Sea-level rise, extreme weather and disturbances by animals and people could cause leaks.

Much of the rationale for Ecology letting Rayonier off with less expensive ways of dealing with least contaminated wastes is based on comparing estimated costs to perceived benefits. But Rayonier and Ecology aren't counting the value of salmon and steelhead or the well-being of current and future generations of people, fish and other animals.