

Joan Beldin

From: Joanie Beldin <joanibldn@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 11:22 AM

To: Abbett, Marian L. (ECY) <MABB461@ECY.WA.GOV>

Cc: Sixkiller, Casey (ECY) <csix461@ECY.WA.GOV>

Subject: Port Angeles Rayonier Mill Public Comment

Dear Site Manager Mariam Abbot,

I thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed options for the clean-up of the Rayonier Mill site.

I live in Port Angeles and regularly take the walkway that passes the chain link fence guarding the Rayonier Mill site. This is a popular walkway used by visitors from all over the country and the world. Not only is this site offensive to what is otherwise a scenic part of our town, but more importantly, it has been left as an area contaminated for decades from industrial pollution, once considered a Superfund site until that label was removed, not because it wasn't deserving of it, but due to city embarrassment. This site is a blight on our community.

DOE now has the opportunity to demand that the owner of this polluted site clean up the mess that it created. Rayonier is responsible for the contamination it left in the wake of its closure and they should be fully responsible for cleaning it up to its fullest extent.

I attended the July 8th public meeting put on by DOE. I was dismayed to hear this agency say that in spite of the fact that the majority of the local comments it receives and in spite of the stance of the Port Angeles city council demanding a full and complete cleanup, Rayonier cannot be required to do a full clean-up. Of course, Rayonier will never volunteer to do so. Rayonier can easily afford the costs of a complete clean-up. I was very disappointed to hear DOE stand behind Rayonier rather than the people of this state who DOE should be most responsible for.

I am making the following requests:

-- Follow the Port Angeles City Council recommendation and select Option 5 calling for a complete cleanup.

-- Remove all contaminated soils and sediments. Option 3 does not factor in the inevitable event of an earthquake or unknown impacts of climate change. There are no guarantees with a cover up in the long term. It makes no sense to do a partial job that may bring contaminants back to the surface and will need to be redone later at a greater cost not only in the monetary sense, but in cost to the environment and human health.

-- The current site must be restored to its natural state, prior to the building of the Rayonier Mill. Prioritize the needs of our fish in this decision. Ennis Creek, whose waters run into this site, is our last best chance for a salmon creek in this city. No fish have been seen swimming up this creek for

several years. In order to provide for their habitat needs, the following steps need to be followed:

- Recreate an estuary to replace brackish water of a salt marsh Rayonier paved to create a parking lot. Salmonids need a mixture of fresh and saltwater to make physical adaptations as they leave the freshwater. Provide for a more naturally flowing stream such as is essential for a salmon stream and remove all pollutants entirely.

It is not unusual to see Southern Resident Orcas swimming in the waters near Port Angeles. These whales feed almost solely on salmon. It is well known that these whales are in danger of extinction due to the steep decline of salmon in the Strait and Sound. Creating a salmon stream in Ennis Creek will provide these whales with one more source of life saving salmon.

-- Oppose any rebuilding on this site. Returning it to its natural state, it will attract wildlife and will become part of the wildlife corridor connecting natural areas east and west of the site.

By choosing the option for a full and complete cleanup, DOE has the opportunity to change this site from one of a blight to an area of pride and an enhancement to our community.

Rayonier created this highly polluted and contaminated site. It must take responsibility and cover all costs. DOE must do right for the community of Port Angeles by holding them to this responsibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan Beldin
Port Angeles