

Michael Bergey

Regarding: Cosmo Speciality Fibers Air Permit

1/14/20

Over the years, the Cosmopolis pulp mill has had many incidents in which high levels of sulfur dioxide were released. In 2017 I contacted the Washington State Department of Ecology about a particularly bad series of emissions. Sulfur dioxide levels in my Central Park neighborhood were high enough to make eyes water, and the moss had disappeared from the trunks of our trees. I requested an air quality test to document my observations, and my request was denied. I was told it is not the job of the Washington State Department of Ecology to document air quality. I was very disappointed by this response, and I am communicating this disappointment now. Is there really no way for a citizen to request an air quality check? How can we authorize renewal of this permit if the State of Washington refuses to do tests of downwind air quality? How can we award a permit for something we refuse to measure? Yes, I was told sulfur dioxide levels were measured at the point of emission — the top of the smokestack — but no work has ever been done on ground level pollution levels during times of air stagnation.

Excessive ground level sulfur dioxide levels compromise a significant public health issue. They can trigger potentially lethal respiratory crises in people with compromised lung health (of which there are many, here on the harbor). I strongly urge the Department of Ecology to include some sort of protocol for ground level air quality monitoring as a part of this permit process. Failing to do so is a blatant violation of due diligence, and of the public's trust.

Sincerely,

Michael Bergey DVM
Blue Cross Veterinary Clinic
916 Clarke Road,
Aberdeen, WA 98520
bcvet2@gmail.com