Seattle Public Utilities

Seattle Public Utilities appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft construction stormwater general permit. SPU supports the proposed permit language but feels that additional language should be added to this permit to address the risks from PCB containing building material. Regional source control partners have invested decades of time and millions of dollars into controlling sources of pollutants that may impact municipal conveyance systems, to protect our waterways and the health of our communities. Polychlorinated biphenyls are one of the primary environmental and health risk drivers in the region.

One of the primary remaining sources of this pollutant are buildings which contain PCBs in certain building materials. Renovation and/or the demolition of buildings which include PCB building materials is likely to result in a discharge of this chemical to ground and the adjacent conveyance systems if appropriate BMPs are not implemented to control the chemical. Requiring the assessment of structures constructed prior to 1980 to determine if they contain PCBs would allow permittees to determine the potential risks and to choose appropriate BMPs to minimize this risk. Including language requiring assessment would align the CSWGP with the Municipal Stormwater General Permit. This section should reference the PCB in Building guidance that was drafted by Ecology and Ecology's Stormwater Management Manuals for Western and Eastern Washington. Alternatively, Ecology could opt to include the language from the Federal Construction General Permit:

"Condition 3.2: If you discharge to a water that is impaired for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and are engaging in demolition of any structure with at least 10,000 square feet of floor space built or renovated before January 1, 1980, you must:
a. Implement controls* to minimize the exposure of PCB-containing building materials, including paint, caulk, and pre-1980 fluorescent lighting fixtures, to precipitation and to stormwater; and
b. Ensure that disposal of such materials is performed in compliance with applicable State, Federal, and local laws.
* Examples of controls to minimize exposure of PCBs to precipitation and stormwater include separating work areas from non-work areas and selecting appropriate personal protective equipment and tools, constructing a containment area so that all dust or debris generated by the work remains within the protected area, and using tools that minimize dust and heat (
The inclusion of language addressing the risks associated with PCB containing building materials will help the permittees prevent discharges of these pollutants into the environment, protecting the adjacent communities and preventing environmental damage. This also supports other permittees by reducing the risks of illicit discharges of these pollutants which may require remediation in the future.