UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
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Seattle, WA 98101-3140

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JAN 30 2012
OFFICE OF WATER AND WATERSHEDS

JAN 27 2012
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

Mr. Jim Bellatty
Water Quality Section Manager
Washington Department of Ecology
4601 North Monroe Street
Spokane, Washington 99203

Dear Mr. Bellatty:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 is writing this letter to affirm our commitment and participation in the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (Task Force). The EPA is committed to the goals of the Task Force to develop a comprehensive plan to bring the Spokane River into compliance with applicable Clean Water Act water quality standards for Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs).

To show our support, we are assigning two EPA senior staff to participate in the Task Force, Don Martin and Mary Lou Soscia. Don Martin is based in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and will be providing facilitation services to the Task Force until a Task Force Facilitator and Coordinator is hired. At that time, Don will represent the EPA in the Task Force, focusing on the development of implementation actions to reduce PCBs and other toxics and will be able to attend Task Force meetings in person. Mary Lou Soscia, EPA Columbia River Basin Coordinator, is also periodically available as a senior policy and technical advisor drawing on her work in the Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Working Group. She has significant expertise in collaboration and funds management and will provide advice to Don in these and other areas as appropriate.

I also want to apologize for the EPA's not meeting the November 29, 2011, deadline for submission of comments on the Spokane Regional Task Force Draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). I understand that by now you have been provided the EPA comments for Task Force Review. I also understand that the Task Force participants are in the process of signing the November 29th version of the MOA. Due to our late submittal of comments, and our desire to not delay the current signature process that is underway, we will not be signing the MOA at this time but will do so in the near future as described below. Despite the fact that we are not signing the MOA at this time, the EPA remains committed to the goals of the task force and will continue our active participation.

As you know, we are currently involved with the development of NPDES permits for the three Idaho dischargers to the Spokane River. As noted in the Introduction of the November 29th version of the MOA, "*This MOA can be amended to accommodate the addition of the Idaho NPDES permittees discharging to the Spokane River….*" We are interested in having any concerns that we may have discussed with the Task Force incorporated into the MOA at the time the Idaho NPDES permits are final. Therefore, in order to not interfere with the current signatory process underway we would like to postpone our becoming signatory to the MOA until the final issuance of the Idaho NPDES permits and also capture any other amendments at that time.

In my August 26, 2011, letter to the three Idaho dischargers, I indicated our strong support for the formation of the Task Force and encouraged their participation. I assure you that the EPA firmly supports the goal of the Task Force to address clean up of PCBs and other toxic materials in the Spokane River watershed. We plan to continue our active participation on the Task Force, and we look forward to further progress in Spokane River watershed restoration. If you have any questions or need further information regarding the EPA's involvement in the Task Force, please contact Don Martin at (208)665-0458, or Mary Lou Soscia at (503)326-5873.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Bussell, Director
Office of Water and Watersheds

cc: Mr. Dan Redline, Regional Administrator, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Barry Burnell, Administrator, Water Quality Division, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Kelly Susewind, Manager, Water Quality Program, Washington Department of Ecology