
Date: October 9, 2009

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Dick Pedersen, Director

Subject: Agenda Item E, Informational and Discussion Item: Toxics Monitoring Program Year-One Update: Willamette River Basin
October 22-23, 2009 EQC Meeting

Why this is Important The toxics monitoring program is part of DEQ's strategic efforts to identify and reduce toxics in our waters, air and land. The program, proposed by Governor Ted Kulongoski and funded by the Oregon Legislature in 2007, grew out of public concern about toxic pollutants in Oregon's waters and their effect on human health and the environment.

Background While progress has been made in reducing the release of the many toxic pollutants to the environment, many chemicals are not regulated in Oregon and others remain in the environment from past practices. Knowing which pollutants may be found in local rivers and streams and identifying their sources provides Oregonians with the information necessary to take measures to reduce levels of toxic pollutants in their environment and to reduce risks to human health and the environment.

The toxics monitoring program will assess toxic pollutants in some rivers and streams and will eventually do so statewide. DEQ is focusing initially on identifying the distribution and magnitude of these pollutants in the Willamette River Basin. DEQ worked closely with watershed councils, natural resource agencies, and other stakeholders to compile information about toxic pollutants in the basin and, based on that work, develop a monitoring strategy. It has been nearly 20 years since DEQ conducted a broad survey of toxic pollutants in the basin, and little information is available for most other basins in Oregon. DEQ plans to move the program to other river basins throughout the state on a five-year rotating basis.

Discussion Staff from DEQ's Laboratory and Environmental Assessment Division will present first year results from its toxics monitoring program and discuss the findings in the context of ongoing toxic pollutant reduction strategies at DEQ. Staff will also discuss next steps in the monitoring program.

Key questions include:

- How should DEQ communicate and present this information to stakeholders and the public? Should this information stand alone or as part of an integrated water quality monitoring effort?
- Although DEQ does not have complete data on the environmental and human health effects of personal care products and other chemicals of emerging concern, how should DEQ engage Oregonians in efforts to decrease the use of these toxic chemical and the release of these toxic pollutants to our environment?
- How should DEQ or commission members broaden our toxic pollutant reduction strategies with other state agencies?
- How do we maintain our scientific objectivity while using data to identify policy and program development needs?

**EQC
Involvement**

The commission will review the report, discuss the questions above, and recommend next steps for the program's communications and outreach plan.

Attachments

A. Draft report of year one for the Oregon Toxics Monitoring Program

Approved:

Division: _____

Report Prepared By: Dennis Ades
Phone: (503) 693-5736