



EPA Region 10, January 2017

## Record of Decision Fact Sheet

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has issued the Record of Decision (ROD) that selects the remedy for the cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. **EPA has selected Alternative F Modified as the final remedy.** At the request of community groups and stakeholders, EPA is planning to host community information sessions to present the details of the final remedy in March 2017. Please visit EPA's website (<http://go.usa.gov/3Wf2B>) for the most up-to-date details about these information sessions as schedules may change.

This fact sheet briefly describes the most recent steps in the process:

- Issuing a proposed plan with a **preferred alternative for cleanup**.
- **Seeking public comments** about the preferred alternative.
- **Responding** to public comments.
- Using public comments to **develop a final cleanup plan (also called the Record of Decision or ROD)**.

### The Preferred Alternative for Cleanup

The EPA's *Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site* was released for public comment on June 8, 2016. The proposed plan was the result of many years of work to investigate the site's contamination and develop potential cleanup alternatives. The proposed plan outlined the different cleanup alternatives and presented a preferred alternative (Alternative I) to address risks to people and the environment from contamination in the lower Willamette River and its river banks.

### Seeking Public Comments

The EPA understands that public involvement is very beneficial throughout the Portland Harbor Superfund process and that community input was critical during the proposed plan phase to ensure a better final decision. Additionally, federal law requires that the public be given the opportunity to read and provide comments on EPA's proposed cleanup plan and supporting information. EPA made a community fact sheet of the proposed plan available on-line in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese and held four public meetings in June and July of 2016 in easily accessible locations around Portland. To encourage broad community input, EPA extended the comment period from 30 to 90 days. EPA accepted comments by email, regular mail, in writing at public meetings and by oral comments at public meetings.



## Responding to Public Comments

The EPA received input from over 5,300 commenters between June 9 and September 6, 2016. Most submissions had multiple comments and all comments were read, categorized and entered into the administrative record for the site and responded to in the responsiveness summary section of the ROD (please see the responsiveness summary in the ROD for additional details).

The five most commonly received comments *about the cleanup* were:

- The preferred alternative for cleanup in EPA's proposed plan does not remove enough contaminated sediment.
- The remedy should ensure that unlimited fish consumption is safe for all groups.
- Dredged material should not be placed in a confined disposal facility in the river.
- Consider an alternative other than Alternative I (EPA's preferred alternative).
- Ensure that those who caused the contamination pay for cleanup.

## Developing a Final Cleanup Plan (also called the Record of Decision or ROD)

Based on the comments received, EPA had to decide whether to select the preferred alternative (Alternative I), select another alternative presented in the proposed plan, modify Alternative I or modify another alternative presented in the proposed plan. Ultimately, EPA evaluated modifications to Alternative F under the nine regulatory decision criteria and selected Alternative F Modified as the final remedy. Alternative F Modified addresses many of the public concerns, is protective of public health and the environment and is cost-effective. The results of selecting Alternative F Modified over Alternative I are:

- **Increased Use of Active Remediation:** The area of active remediation (dredging, capping and enhanced natural recovery) has increased by over 100 acres for sediment (291 acres in Alternative I to 394 acres in Alternative F Modified) and over 3,500 lineal feet of river bank (19,472 lineal feet in Alternative I to 23,305 lineal feet in Alternative F Modified). Additionally, to control migration of contaminants, approximately 133 acres of sediment will be treated 'in place' (or in situ treatment). The timeframe to implement the work in the final cleanup plan increased from 7 years to about 13 years.
- **Protective of Human Health and the Environment:** Removal of more contaminants makes it safe for all but the most sensitive populations (such as breastfeeding infants whose mothers eat resident fish) and subsistence fishers to eat more fish from the river more often. Concentrations of mercury from sources outside the site will always require limits on fish-consumption. Additionally, the final cleanup plan reduces the potential for direct contact with contaminants in the sediment. Removal of more contaminants is also protective of wildlife.
- **Simplified Use of Remedial Action Levels (RALs):** RALs (sediment cleanup concentrations for a focused group of contaminants used to define where to cap or dredge) will now be consistent throughout the majority of the site (except in the navigation channel). Within the navigation channel, other RALs will be consistently used (see ROD section 14.2.1).
- **Reduced Impacts Downstream:** Less contamination will flow into the Columbia River and Multnomah Channel from the site since more contamination is being removed or contained in the site.
- **More Permanent:** The cleanup will rely less on monitored natural recovery and institutional controls (such as fish advisories and land use restrictions) since it removes more of the contamination from the river.
- **No In-River Disposal:** There will be no in-river confined disposal facility.
- **Cost:** The costs of cleanup will increase to approximately \$1.05 billion. The cost is commensurate with the scope and scale of contamination and with similar sites across the country.
- **Economic Benefits:** This final remedy will create jobs during active cleanup and will make riverfront properties available for future re-development.
- **Commitment to a Larger Watershed Approach:** EPA and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality have committed to working on a watershed strategy that will enhance the remedy by reducing background levels of contaminants coming into the site.

## Finding Site Information and Documents

Site documents such as the full Record of Decision, Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study, Proposed Plan as well as other information and materials (such as the *Record of Decision Community Summary*) are available on EPA's website (<http://go.usa.gov/3Wf2B>) and at three local information repositories that are also listed on EPA's website. For more information, please contact Laura Knudsen at 206-553-1838 or [knudsen.laura@epa.gov](mailto:knudsen.laura@epa.gov).