

# DUWAMISH RIVER CLEANUP COALITION

Technical Advisory Group

Community Advisory Council:

Community Coalition for  
Environmental Justice

The Duwamish Tribe

Environmental Coalition  
Of South Seattle

Georgetown Community  
Council

IM-A-PAL Foundation

People for Puget Sound  
a program of WA Environmental Council

Puget Soundkeeper  
Alliance

South Park Neighborhood  
Association

Washington Toxics  
Coalition

Waste Action Project

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*Working to ensure a  
Duwamish River cleanup  
that is accepted by and  
benefits the community  
and protects fish, wildlife  
and human health.*

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For immediate release: Monday, June 30, 2014

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## NEWS RELEASE

### Macklemore, Steinbrueck, community leaders aim to reclaim Seattle's Duwamish River

– Seattle, WA. Seattle hip hop icon, Macklemore, and a host of community leaders representing residents, Tribes, workers, fishing families and others concerned with the health of Seattle's Duwamish River, have taken aim at an upcoming cleanup plan for the river that they say fails to protect the health of the river and its communities.

The group launched a public awareness campaign today to highlight the critical role the Duwamish River plays in many people's lives, and the need to protect it. The "River For All" campaign calls on EPA and local elected officials to support the community's call for a health-protective cleanup of the river. The campaign features a billboard of Macklemore on Highway 99 South where it approaches the Duwamish River, and a website filled with personal testimonials from people affected by the river's legacy of pollution.

*We are Seattle. No bridge, boundaries or invisible man-made lines divide us,"* explains Macklemore. *"This is our home, our people and our community. This is our city's only river."*

The Duwamish River was listed as a federal Superfund Site in 2001, identifying it as one of the most toxic waste sites in the nation. EPA's cleanup plan, released for public comment last year, states that its approach is unlikely to make the river safe enough to protect the health of people who regularly eat its resident fish, like perch and crab.

The river's fishermen include Tribes, whose members have historic and treaty rights to the river's natural resources, and many low-income, immigrant and refugee families from throughout the Seattle area.

The EPA says it plans to rely largely on a highly uncertain method to try to clean the river. That method, called natural recovery, doesn't remove the pollution, but simply monitors the river bottom to see if newer, cleaner deposits bury the river's contaminated mud over time.

"That's simply not good enough," says James Rasmussen, coordinator of the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, EPA's Community Advisory Group for the site. "These communities deserve our full protection –and that means removing more of the toxic waste. We need a cleanup that we know will work, and that will last." EPA defines removal of contamination as the only permanent remedy.

Rasmussen's group represents Duwamish area residents; tribal members, like Rasmussen himself; and other affected stakeholders, and is helping to coordinate the push for a stronger, more health-protective cleanup than that proposed by EPA. It has hired independent technical advisors to work with the community to develop recommendations on how to improve the EPA cleanup plan. The recommendations include removing more of the toxic waste, and "kick-starting" recovery of the rest of the river by laying a protective layer of clean material over the remaining contamination. They also call for including a plan to reduce ongoing sources of pollution in the EPA order, expected later this year.

"Evidence from other cleanup sites around the country shows that 'natural recovery' can take decades longer than expected, and may not stop buried chemicals from getting into the food chain anyway," according to the coalition's environmental consultant, Peter deFur. "The responsible approach, from an environmental and health perspective, is to get the toxins out of the river altogether."

Seattle, King County, the Port of Seattle and Boeing are partially responsible for the cost of the cleanup because of a history of sewage releases, polluted runoff from city pipes, and industrial waste. Together, they formed a group called the Lower Duwamish Waterway Group (LDWG), which is lobbying EPA to approve a plan that removes less toxic material than EPA has proposed. "Our own local governments, and Boeing, are asking EPA to require even less removal of the river's toxic waste, instead of supporting their constituents' call for a thorough cleanup," says BJ Cummings, Policy Advisor for the community advisory group. "We're not sure that our elected representatives are getting the full story."

They also point to public comments EPA received on their draft plan, which were released earlier this year. More than 2,300 people submitted letters in at 10 languages, reflecting the diversity of the communities affected. An analysis by the community advisory group shows that public comments supported more cleanup over less by ratio of more than 10 to 1.

More information on the River For All campaign and the community advisory group's cleanup recommendations can be found at <http://riverforall.org>.

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### Sample Testimonials

*"The Duwamish Tribe is forever connected to the river; it is we who have been here for thousands of years."*

– Cecile Hansen, Duwamish Tribal Chairwoman

*"From fish runs to frieght, the Duwamish River has served human settlement in so many ways for so long."*

– Peter Steinbrueck, former Seattle City Councilman

*"It is important to me to live and work in a healthy and safe place for my family."*

– Paulina Lopez, South Park resident

*"Cleaning up the Duwamish is essential to the recovery of Puget Sound."*

– Denis Hays, The Bullitt Foundation