

DEQ Requests Comments on Proposed Staff Report: Recommended Revision of the Remedial Action for Union Pacific Railroad Rail Yard Site



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Comments due: 5 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022

Project location: 536 A Street, Ashland, Jackson County

Proposal: The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is proposing a revision of the recommended remedial action for voluntary cleanup of contamination related to railyard operations on the former Union Pacific Railroad Company rail yard site located in Ashland. The site covered under this remedial action is a 11.7-acre portion located on the central portion of the original 21-acre property. The Southern Pacific Railroad entered the 21-acre property into the Voluntary Cleanup Program in 1993 for cleanup of contamination related to railyard operations. Southern Pacific merged with Union Pacific in 1996. DEQ previously issued no further action determinations for approximately 6.4 acres of the original 21 acres. The eastern 2.85 acres of the original property are currently used for agricultural purposes and not believed to have been associated with railyard-related activities.

The recommended revised remedial action will allow the site to be safely developed for industrial, commercial, or urban residential use. The remedial action includes excavation of contaminated soil from the western 8.7-acre area of the site and consolidation on the eastern three-acre area of the site with a vegetated cap. Deed restrictions will also be implemented to prevent development for single family residential use and to maintain effectiveness of the capped three-acre area.

Highlights: The site operated as a locomotive maintenance, service, and railcar repair facility between 1887 and 1986. Facility operations resulted in environmental contamination at the site. The contaminants consist of polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon compounds in shallow soil and metals and petroleum products, including diesel and bunker oil, in shallow soil and limited areas of groundwater. In 2001 Union Pacific proposed, and, after significant public engagement, DEQ approved a cleanup plan and issued a Record of Decision to address contamination for potential future single-family residential site use. The 2001 decision was not implemented because of an increase in some of the applicable regulatory cleanup limits, which meant not as much contamination would need to be cleaned up. The railroad has since collected additional data and has now proposed a new cleanup plan to address contamination. DEQ has reviewed the new plan and agrees it meets state regulatory criteria considering future uses of the site. The most significant change in this proposed remedial action approach is that contaminated soil will be consolidated and capped on a portion of the site instead of being hauled away to a landfill.

DEQ believes the revised remedial action will be protective of human health and the environment as required by Oregon cleanup laws and will eliminate the need for trucking contaminated soil through the community for disposal. After the public comment period is held for this proposal, DEQ will consider all comments on this revised remedial action before issuing a new Record of Decision.

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Public Notice

How to comment: Send comments between 8 a.m. Oct. 15, 2022 and 5 p.m. Nov. 30, 2022 to DEQ Project Manager, Margaret Oscilia, by phone at 503-726-6522, email at margaret.oscilia@deq.oregon.gov, or mail to Western Region DEQ, Attn: Margaret Oscilia, 4026 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, OR 97302.

Find more information: Detailed information supporting DEQ's recommended revision of the remedial action is located on DEQ's web site at: <https://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ECSI/ecsiquery.asp> (search Site ID 1146). If you do not have web access and want to review the project file, contact the DEQ Project Manager, Margaret Oscilia, at 503-726-6522.

The next step: DEQ will address comments received after the end of the comment period and prior to issuing the revised Record of Decision. Cleanup work, if approved, would likely commence in spring 2024.

Alternative formats: DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



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