

**The cleanup of the worst unaddressed toxic contamination in Commencement Bay is starting to take shape. Occidental Chemical Corp., formerly operating on the Hylebos Waterway in the Port of Tacoma, contaminated the soil and groundwater with a massive plume of dangerous chemicals. As officials decide on a cleanup plan, the company responsible is pushing for a *cheap* option instead of an *effective* one. We can't let that happen.**

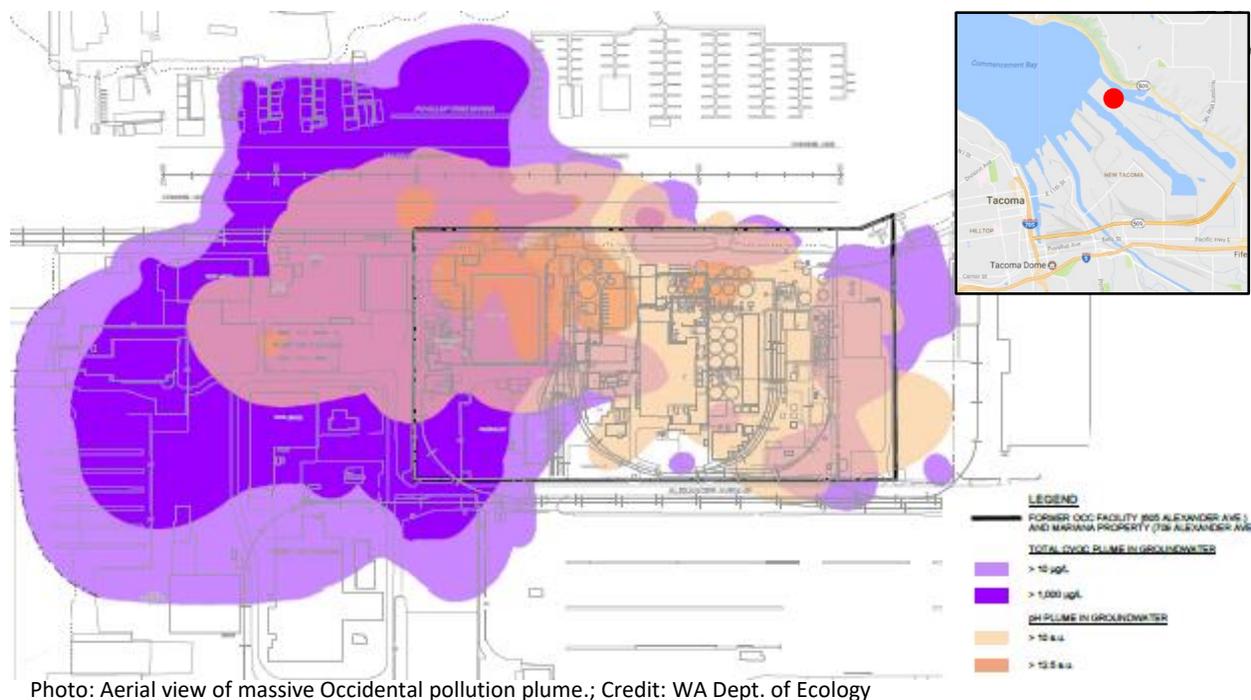


Photo: Aerial view of massive Occidental pollution plume.; Credit: WA Dept. of Ecology

## **Worst Pollution in Commencement Bay**

For nearly 100 years, Occidental Chemical Corp. manufactured a slew of different hazardous chemicals along the Hylebos Waterway in the Tacoma tideflats. *Decades of poor housekeeping practices and waste dumping has resulted in groundwater and soil being highly contaminated with harmful, cancer-causing pollutants.*

The resulting pollution plume is practically incomprehensible, and is by far the worst unaddressed contamination in Commencement Bay. Today, the pollution plume is the size of five CenturyLink Fields, is deeper than the Tacoma Dome is tall, and stretches underneath the Hylebos to Marine View Drive. It includes heavy metals, PCB's and a range of highly dangerous volatile organic chemicals. *In some places, the pH is as high as 14, which is stronger than drain cleaner and enough to dissolve the rock into jelly.*

This pollution poses an immediate threat to both people and the environment. If it enters the waters of the Hylebos, contaminants would be swept out to Commencement Bay where they would threaten all wildlife, from oysters to orcas. The Hylebos also leads to a creek that supports salmon and trout. Humans can be exposed to toxics by breathing in or swallowing contaminated materials, or by eating contaminated fish and shellfish. The pollution plume can also eventually release the toxic, cancer-causing gas vinyl chloride into our air and water.

## **Pushing for Effective Cleanup**

The severity of Occidental's pollution landed the site on the federal list of Superfund cleanups in the early 1980's. Decades later, we are finally

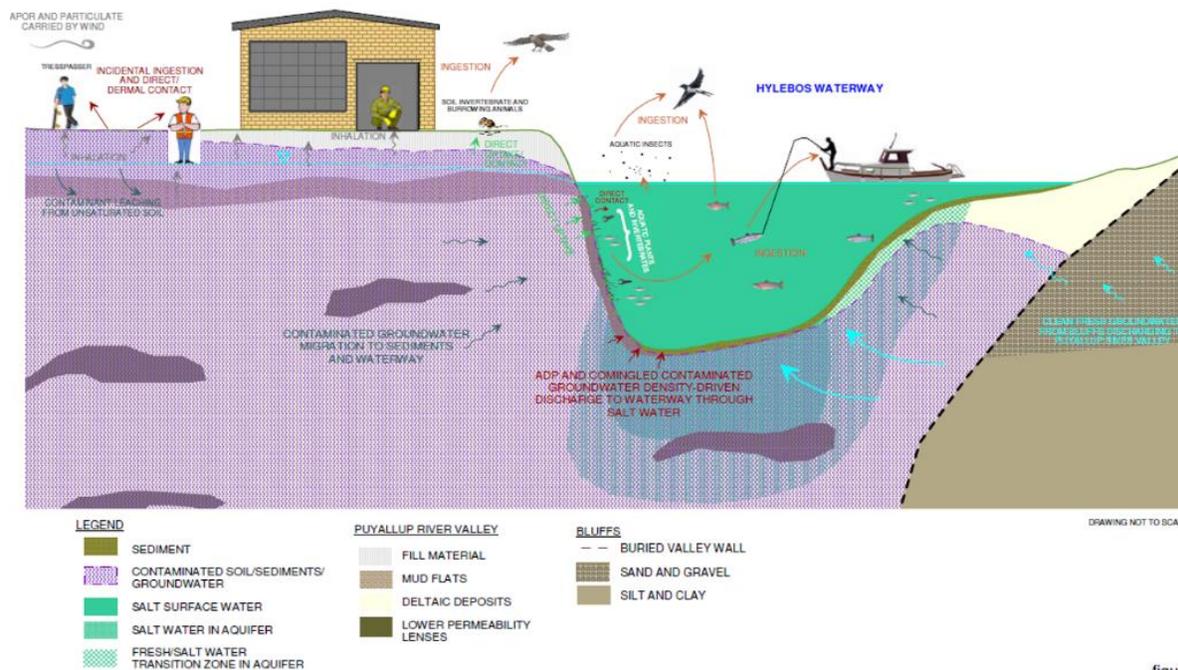


Photo: Exposure to Occidental Chemical Pollution Plume; Credit: WA Dept. of Ecology

nearing the start of a cleanup. The Washington Department of Ecology is currently deciding on a cleanup plan. This will determine how much pollution gets removed, and how much will be stay in the environment forever.

However, the company responsible is setting the stage to walk away from this mess *without a comprehensive cleanup*. Occidental Chemical is pushing for a cleanup that would remove only 41% of the toxic pollution. **Cleaning less than half of this dangerous contamination is unacceptable.** Despite the fact that Occidental brought in a whopping \$152 million in pre-tax profits during last quarter alone, the company is advocating for a cheap option instead of an effective one. *We cannot afford to let polluters walk away from their mess.* That's why we need you to push for the strongest cleanup possible.

## Take Action!

Time is running out to ensure an adequate cleanup. **The State Department of Ecology is accepting public comments until April 27<sup>th</sup>!**

Email [rcruz@healthybay.org](mailto:rcruz@healthybay.org) for a comment template, and send your message that 41% clean is not clean enough.

Comments should relate to the draft Feasibility Study (<http://bit.ly/1NYwYMg>), which is the document that compares cleanup plans. Send your comments to:

Kerry Graber, Site Manager  
 Washington State Department of Ecology  
 PO Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504-7775  
[Kerry.graber@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Kerry.graber@ecy.wa.gov)

**Citizens for a Healthy Bay is also hosting a free public forum on the cleanup April 5<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30pm in room KEY 102 at the UW Tacoma Campus.** A panel of experts will tell us more about Occidental's pollution, the risks it poses and how to help. This will be followed by a Q&A session so that you can get the info you need for your comments!

**With questions or to receive updates on this issue, email Ryan Cruz at [rcruz@healthybay.org](mailto:rcruz@healthybay.org)**  
**Learn more at [www.healthybay.org](http://www.healthybay.org)**