

South Sound's **DIRTY DOZEN**

2026 Status Update



Photography by Stephanie Morris | @steph_snaps_253

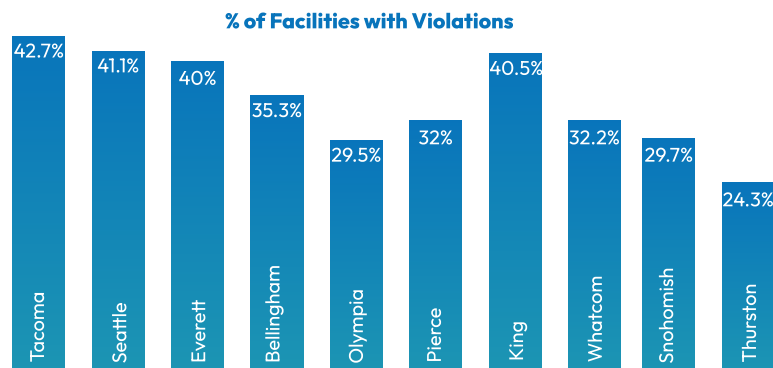


One-Year Progress Update

In 2025, Communities for a Healthy Bay released the South Sound's Dirty Dozen Report, highlighting industrial facilities around the South Sound with ongoing pollution concerns, legacy contamination, and patterns of regulatory noncompliance.

This update relies on 2025 monitoring and compliance data to evaluate conditions at the Dirty Dozen facilities. The data indicate limited improvement, largely attributable to enforcement actions, while several facilities continue to present ongoing violations and unresolved risks to local waterways. The report pairs facility-level summaries for all twelve sites with aggregated analyses of compliance trends across Tacoma and the South Sound.

Facilities that made improvements did so through two primary mechanisms: (1) Clean Water Act litigation; and (2) permit-triggered corrective action requirements under Washington State Department of Ecology permits.



Percent of facilities with violations reflects the proportion of permitted facilities with at least one recorded permit violation in FY2025, based on total facilities holding active discharge permits.

Keeping Communities in the Dark

The 2025 data highlight a critical distinction between reported and unreported pollution. Benchmark exceedances and effluent limit violations reflect known impacts to water quality, while repeated monitoring and reporting failures keep communities, regulators, and policy makers in the dark about what may be entering local waterways. When facilities fail to sample or report, the public loses visibility into the quality of local waters.

Enforcement-Driven Stormwater Improvements & Reactive Compliance

These facilities implemented stormwater improvements through two primary mechanisms: litigation and permit-triggered corrective action requirements.

TEMCO Grain Terminal

Facility Type: Grain Export Terminal

Communities for a Healthy Bay filed a Clean Water Act citizen suit in 2025 alleging violations of the Clean Water Act related to discharges of grain and grain dust into Commencement Bay as well as stormwater management at the facility. That litigation resulted in a 2026 federal consent decree requiring TEMCO to evaluate and implement measures to control or eliminate discharges of grain and visible grain dust from the facility, evaluate and implement measures to control sources of zinc in the facility's stormwater discharges, and expand monitoring of stormwater discharges. The settlement also secured \$320,000 in environmental benefit funding for South Puget Sound.

Carlile Transportation Systems, LLC

Facility Type: Transportation & Logistics Yard

A stormwater treatment system was not installed until after more than a decade of severe pollution, including exceedances many times above benchmark levels. The upgrade followed a Clean Water Act lawsuit, not voluntary compliance. Since installation, discharges have remained within limits.

Tacoma Wheel Shop

Facility Type: Metal Fabrication / Industrial Shop

Triggered a Level 3 corrective action after repeated benchmark exceedances across multiple pollutants, including copper, zinc, turbidity, total suspended solids, and oil & grease. The most recent exceedances occurred in April 2025, immediately prior to installation of treatment measures. The facility implemented these upgrades only after years within the corrective action framework. It remains unclear whether the upgrades will meaningfully reduce pollution. Continued monitoring will determine whether this reflects substantive improvement or compliance on paper.

Tru Grit Abrasives

Facility Type: Abrasive Manufacturing Facility

Continued to exceed benchmarks even after triggering a Level 3 corrective action, demonstrating ongoing noncompliance during the period when improvements were required. The facility also faced civil enforcement for a system failure that allowed stormwater to bypass required monitoring. The facility has since installed a new treatment system. No violations have been reported following the upgrades; however, continued monitoring will determine whether this reflects a durable improvement.



About 50% of violations are not discharge violations, but instead reporting and monitoring violations. These keep the agencies and public in the dark about what is being released into the water making water quality improvement more difficult to tackle.

Facilities without Upgrades

These facilities, though having a past of noncompliance with their permits, have not made updates to their facilities in the last year.

Concrete Technology Corporation

Facility Type: Concrete Manufacturing

No documented facility upgrades or infrastructure improvements in 2025.

Emerald Services

Facility Type: Hazardous Waste Storage and Transfer

Repeated hazardous waste spills and ongoing regulatory violations demonstrate a lack of meaningful corrective actions to address underlying risks.

Kleenblast Division

Facility Type: Surface Preparation / Abrasive Blasting

Continued reporting failures and benchmark exceedances in 2025, reflecting persistent compliance deficiencies.

Manke Lumber Company, Sumner

Facility Type: Wood Products Manufacturing

Ongoing hazardous waste generation and storage concerns as well as increased waste. The facility has a history of enforcement actions with no documented upgrades.

Simon Metals / Metro Metals

Facility Type: Scrap Metal Recycling

No publicly documented infrastructure upgrades or corrective actions despite prior compliance concerns and past incidents involving frequent fires.

Quality Transport & Truck Rail Handling

Facility Type: Specialized Freight, Trucking, Long Distance

Communities for a Healthy Bay sent a Notice of Intent to Sue to the facility in early May 2026 alleging persistent violations of the facility's Clean Water Act permit that authorizes discharges of stormwater associated with industrial activity.

Legacy Polluters

These sites are defined by historical contamination, with progress driven by cleanup processes rather than recent operational improvements.

Superlon Plastics

Facility Type: Former Plastics Manufacturing

Continues to be in "interim" status meaning the pollution has been contained but no true measure of progress is being made at the site.

Occidental Chemical Corporation

Facility Type: Former Chemical Manufacturing

Not in an active remediation for cleanup measures. The site continues to work through administrative checkpoints.

Across Washington, the worst 10% of polluters account for nearly half of all violations. In Tacoma, for example, 99 facilities reported violations, but only 10 facilities were responsible for nearly 40% of the violations. Targeting these top violators would significantly reduce overall pollution.

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR:

“The South Puget Sound is a shared resource, and the communities that live, work, and play along its shores have a right to clean water. At Communities for a Healthy Bay, we believe that when our waterways improve, the people and ecosystems around them thrive. In 2025, we released the South Sound’s Dirty Dozen, identifying twelve industrial facilities with ongoing pollution concerns, legacy contamination, and patterns of regulatory noncompliance. One year later, this update reflects our continued commitment to transparency and accountability. Where progress has been made, it matters, and we recognize it. Where violations persist and monitoring failures continue to keep regulators and the public in the dark, we will keep pushing. This work belongs to all of us, and so does the bay.”

Looking Ahead

Communities for a Healthy Bay will continue monitoring South Sound facilities, tracking pollution data, and advancing enforcement and cleanup efforts. Protecting water quality requires sustained accountability to keep pace with industrial activity.

Community engagement is critical. Members of the public can help by:

- Participating in permit processes and submitting comments
- Supporting policies that strengthen water quality protections
- Advocating for enforcement of environmental laws
- Encouraging institutions to prioritize environmental protection

Sustained oversight, engagement, and enforcement are essential to ensure progress across the broader watershed.



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Your donation supports in-depth reports like this, grassroots organizing, and the push for real change.



Disclaimer: This report is based on publicly available regulatory data and is intended for public understanding and policy discussion. It does not make legal allegations or assign liability. Analysis reflects Communities for a Healthy Bay’s review of public records. Readers should consult official sources for complete and current information.