



**Embargoed until: May 13, 2013**

**Contact:** BJ Cummings, DRCC/TAG: [bj@duwamishcleanup.org](mailto:bj@duwamishcleanup.org), (206) 458-0284  
Linn Gould, Just Health Action: [gouldjha@gmail.com](mailto:gouldjha@gmail.com), (206) 324-0297  
Alex Dery Snider, Pew Trusts: [aderysnider@pewtrusts.org](mailto:aderysnider@pewtrusts.org); (202) 540-6590

## NEWS RELEASE

### **1st Superfund cleanup Health Impact Assessment in nation: Better protection needed for Tribes, fishers, residents**

*Seattle, WA.* A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of EPA's Proposed Cleanup Plan for Seattle's Duwamish River will be released today, following a Briefing to the Seattle City Council. The lower Duwamish River is a federal Superfund Site, and EPA has issued its proposed cleanup plan for public review and comment. This HIA is the first in the nation for a Superfund cleanup plan, and was conducted by the University of Washington School of Public Health and two non-profit organizations: Just Health Action and the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/ Technical Advisory Group (DRCC/TAG).

<b>WHEN:</b>	12:00 P.M., MONDAY, MAY 13
<b>WHERE:</b>	SEATTLE CITY HALL STEPS, 3RD AVE (btwn James St & Cherry St)
<b>WHAT:</b>	RELEASE OF DUWAMISH CLEANUP HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The HIA examined impacts on three communities: residents, Tribes, and subsistence fishers, using the World Health Organization's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

"This is a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation of how the cleanup decisions we are making today will affect the health of our most vulnerable communities into the future," says BJ Cummings of Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/TAG, EPA's community advisory group for the site. "It's essential that we ensure that this cleanup will protect everyone's health to the greatest extent possible."

The HIA findings include potential health impacts and benefits from the cleanup that have not yet been adequately considered in EPA's evaluation and selection of its proposed plan, such as:

- long-term residual contamination in seafood and sediments, food insecurity, and cultural disruption, if the cleanup does not end localized fishing advisories;
- potential job opportunities for residents and gentrification of riverside neighborhoods; and
- restrictions on Tribal rights and practices, and harmful effects of disempowerment and/or depression, if resources are not fully restored.

The HIA also makes recommendations for minimizing harmful impacts, maximizing the health benefits of cleanup, and promoting health equity. The recommendations include:

- identify or provide culturally-appropriate alternative sources of fish until advisories are lifted
- engage and empower fishing communities to plan, implement and monitor fishing interventions
- use clean fuels, green technologies, and mitigate any trucking and noise impacts for residents
- provide education signage and washing stations at local beaches until cleanup goals are met
- ensure that the cleanup restores the Tribes' traditional resource uses and protects Treaty rights
- establish a fund to be used by the Tribes to enhance their health until cleanup goals are reached

“Health equity means that everyone deserves the opportunity to attain their full potential,” says Linn Gould, of Just Health Action. “This means that if there are impacts of the proposed plan that unfairly disadvantage some groups and they are avoidable, they should be mitigated.”

The report released today is an Advance HIA Report, with findings and recommendations to date. A separate news release from the University of Washington School of Public Health will provide additional details and information from lead UW researcher, Dr. Bill Daniell.

A Final HIA Report, including an assessment of health effects on workers and employment, and potential neighborhood and business revitalization, will be submitted to EPA in June.

EPA is accepting public comments on its proposed plan until June 13, 2013. Information about upcoming public meetings and how to comment is available at <http://www.duwamishcleanup.org>.

This HIA is supported by a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

###