

June 5, 2026

Brian Peterson, Senior Vice President of Operations
 Port Townsend Paper Company
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 Port Townsend WA 98368
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RE: A Community Member's Request for Safety, Transparency, and Partnership

Dear Mr. Peterson and Port Townsend Paper Company (PTPC) Leadership,

My name is David Ginsberg. I am a retired business consultant — my career was in antique importing, direct marketing, and business consulting — and I have lived in Port Townsend for ten years. I am writing to you as a neighbor.

For most of those ten years, when I caught the distinctive odor drifting from the direction of the mill, I assumed it was simply the smell of pulp — an industrial fact of life in a mill town, unpleasant but essentially harmless. The kind of thing you get used to. I never gave it much thought.

That changed when I started researching what that smell actually is. In 2024, federal scientists from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) conducted a health study specific to Port Townsend and found that the compounds producing that odor — hydrogen sulfide, methyl mercaptan, dimethyl sulfide, and dimethyl disulfide — were measured near the mill above US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chronic health reference concentrations. These are not nuisance compounds. They are toxic at sustained exposure levels. The smell I had dismissed as a minor inconvenience for a decade is, according to federal science, a documented public health concern in my community.

I suspect I am not alone in having made that assumption. And I think you should know that many of your neighbors made it too.

What Prompted This Letter

On May 26, 2026, eleven workers died at the Nippon Dynawave kraft paper mill in Longview, Washington when a white liquor storage tank imploded. Governor Ferguson called it the deadliest industrial tragedy in modern Washington State history. Port Townsend Paper Company operates the identical kraft process — the same white liquor chemistry, the same pressure vessels, the same hydrogen sulfide — five miles from our homes and on the shores of Port Townsend Bay.

A few days after the Longview disaster, I began researching Port Townsend Paper Company for the first time. Until then, despite living five miles away for ten years, I had never looked closely at the mill's compliance record. What I found in US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s publicly available EPA Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) database was not what I expected from a company that describes itself as 'a responsible neighbor.'

- Clean Air Act: High Priority Violation — the most serious noncompliance level the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tracks — every single quarter for the past three years. Twelve consecutive quarters.
- Two new formal enforcement orders from the Washington State Department of Ecology issued in April and May 2026.
- A June 2025 hazardous waste inspection found nine violations, including failures in emergency preparedness and prevention procedures.
- In April 2025, 114,630 gallons of untreated industrial wastewater spilled directly into Port Townsend Bay near Glen Cove — a place where many of us crab and fish. When the Port Townsend Leader asked whether the discharge was toxic to marine life and whether shellfish from the area were safe to eat, PTPC declined to answer. That silence was deeply troubling to many in this community.

I am not writing to threaten litigation or to call for the mill's closure. Port Townsend Paper Company has been part of this community for nearly 100 years. It employs 300 people at good wages. That matters enormously. I want the mill to succeed — and I want to be able to feel good about it as a neighbor.

I want to acknowledge that on June 1, 2026, Port Townsend Paper Company issued a public statement indicating it had met with industry experts to discuss failure modes, verified tank vents are open and overflow lines are not submerged, and is scheduling non-destructive testing to reassess tank conditions in 2026. These are welcome initial steps, and I appreciate that the company is

responding. What I am asking is that these steps be followed by independent inspection with results made public — so that our community can have confidence, not just reassurance.

What I Am Asking

My request is straightforward, and I believe it is entirely consistent with what a genuinely responsible company would want to do:

Safety

Conduct an independent inspection of your white liquor storage tanks — their sizes, ages, condition, and inspection history — and share the results publicly. The Longview disaster made clear that this information matters. A company that voluntarily discloses it, before anyone demands it, earns enormous community trust. A seismic assessment of your chemical storage infrastructure would also be appropriate given our location on the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

Health

Implement independent quarterly biological testing of your bay discharge — using live aquatic organisms to measure real-world harm, not just a list of named compounds. Install fence-line air monitoring with real-time public data so residents like me can see what we are breathing. I spent ten years assuming the smell was harmless. I should not have had to wait for a federal study to learn otherwise.

Conduct annual independent occupational health screenings for your workers in high-exposure areas — lung function, neurological assessments, and blood testing for lead and manganese. PTPC releases thousands of pounds of these compounds annually. Chronic hydrogen sulfide exposure causes lung disease and neurological damage that never shows up on an injury log. The 300 people who work inside that mill every day deserve to know what their bodies are carrying.

Support an independent community health study in coordination with Jefferson County Public Health and the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). The 2024 Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) finding confirmed that residents near the mill are exposed to toxic compounds above US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chronic health reference levels. We do not know what the cumulative health impact has been on our community — on longtime residents, on children, on people with respiratory conditions. That is a question your neighbors deserve an answer to, and one that you are uniquely positioned to help answer.

Fire History

Three fires occurred at this facility in less than 12 months. A 200-yard wood chip conveyor belt spanning six stories was fully engulfed in January 2022 — East Jefferson Fire Rescue found a compromised sprinkler system with a part missing, Chief Bret Black noted 'there's room for improvement,' and the cause was never determined; damage exceeded \$500,000. A second fire followed in March 2022; the cause was again undetermined. A third fire in December 2022 involved a confined space so dangerous that firefighters could not enter; a firefighter was hospitalized for exhaustion. Three fires in under 12 months. Compromised sprinklers. Causes undetermined.

12-Hour Shifts, Mandatory Overtime, and Worker Fatigue

Your own job postings confirm that production workers work 12-hour rotating shifts — two day shifts and two night shifts on an 8-day rotation — with overtime described as frequently available and, by worker accounts, frequently mandatory. Former employees on public review platforms describe: 'Overtime is mandatory and more frequent than not.' 'Millwrights are doing jobs that used to take 6 people minimum with 3. Hours are long — scheduled downs are always 16-hour days, twice the work and half the people.' 'Safety came second to getting equipment back up and running.'

Your own job listings confirm the work environment includes steam, dust, mists, noise, odors, temperature extremes, heights, confined spaces, and sharp instruments or moving equipment. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has documented that 12-hour rotating shifts — especially night shifts — significantly increase accident risk and impaired judgment. Adding mandatory overtime extends workers to 14, 16, or more consecutive hours operating around white liquor, recovery boilers, and elevated conveyor systems — all high-consequence environments where fatigue-induced inattention can be fatal. The Nippon Dynawave disaster occurred at a shift change.

Environment

Commission an independent assessment of Port Townsend Bay near your discharge outfall — shellfish tissue testing, sediment sampling, a biological survey. This is your bay too. Its health reflects directly on you.

Transparency and Compliance

When something goes wrong — as it did in April 2025 — tell your neighbors what happened. Answer the questions. The silence after that spill did more damage to community trust than the spill itself. A genuine commitment to transparency, with regular public updates on your compliance status and a clear timeline for resolving the violations in US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s records, would transform how this community sees you.

Twelve consecutive quarters of Clean Air Act High Priority Violations is a pattern that requires a public response — not because regulators are demanding it, but because the people who live next to this mill deserve to know what is being done and when.

The full compliance record for Atlas Holdings portfolio companies is publicly available at the Good Jobs First Violation Tracker: violationtracker.goodjobsfirst.org/parent/atlas-holdings

An Invitation

I am a private citizen. I have no authority over Port Townsend Paper Company and no desire to make an adversary of you. What I have is a genuine concern for this community's health and safety, a body of research compiled from public sources, and a strong preference for resolving this through conversation rather than confrontation.

I would welcome a meeting — a tour of the facility, a conversation with your leadership team, or simply a phone call. I am prepared to listen as much as I talk. And I am genuinely open to learning things that might change or refine my understanding of what is happening at the mill.

What I am asking for, at its core, is simple: be the responsible neighbor you say you are. Show this community — in actions, not just words — that safety, health, the environment, and transparency are your number one priorities.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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