

June 5, 2026

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
Director's Office
4770 Buford Highway NE
Atlanta, GA 30341
800-232-4636 | atsdr.cdc.gov

RE: Request for Follow-Up Investigation — Port Townsend, WA — Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) 2024 Findings and Longview Disaster Context — V_1.17

Dear Director,

I write with a simple and direct request: we want Port Townsend Paper Company to make safety, health, and the environment their number one priority. Not their second priority. Not a consideration balanced against production schedules and profit margins. Number one.

I am a Port Townsend, Washington resident writing to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) about our community and about PTPC. In 2024, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) scientists conducted a health consultation specific to Port Townsend and found that hydrogen sulfide, methyl mercaptan, dimethyl sulfide, and dimethyl disulfide — Total Reduced Sulfur (TRS) compounds associated with PTPC's kraft pulping operations — were measured above US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chronic health reference concentrations near the facility. That finding is the most important public health document produced about our community in decades.

On May 26, 2026, eleven workers died at the Nippon Dynawave kraft paper mill in Longview, Washington when a white liquor tank imploded. PTPC operates the identical kraft process, five miles from Port Townsend Bay and our residential neighborhoods. The same Total Reduced Sulfur (TRS) chemistry your scientists measured in Port Townsend was released during the Longview cleanup in levels that caused community-wide hydrogen sulfide odor alerts.

What I Am Requesting from Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR):

- A formal follow-up health consultation for Port Townsend to determine whether the 2024 findings represent an ongoing public health risk requiring regulatory action, and to assess whether worker exposure inside the PTPC fence line warrants independent occupational health investigation
- A formal assessment of whether the Washington State Department of Health's community guidance (DOH 334-553, which states paper mill odors are 'rarely at levels that harm health') should be corrected in light of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) 2024 Port Townsend-specific findings

- A recommendation to US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and WA Dept. of Ecology that fence-line air monitoring at PTPC be required, with real-time public data feeds, as a follow-up measure to the 2024 consultation
- In the context of the Longview disaster, an assessment of whether communities adjacent to active kraft mills — including Port Townsend — should be prioritized for expanded Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) exposure investigation

Nearly 2,000 odor complaints were filed by Port Townsend residents between 2016 and 2021 alone. These are not people being oversensitive. They are people being repeatedly exposed to compounds that your own scientists have confirmed exceed chronic health reference levels. The 2024 finding deserves follow-up action.

Respectfully,

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