

June 5, 2026

The Honorable Emily Randall
 U.S. House of Representatives, WA-6th District
 1531 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515
 DC Office: 202-225-5916 | Bremerton: 360-373-9725 | Tacoma: 253-272-3515

RE: Port Townsend Paper Company — Federal Action Needed Following the Longview Disaster — V_1.13

Dear Congresswoman Randall,

I am a constituent writing from Port Townsend — your district — about Port Townsend Paper Company, the kraft mill operating five miles from our community. Following the May 26 Longview disaster and your calls for a thorough investigation, I am asking you to direct that same concern toward the only remaining active kraft mill in Washington State.

On May 26, 2026, eleven workers died at the Nippon Dynawave kraft paper mill in Longview, Washington, when a 900,000-gallon white liquor tank imploded — the deadliest industrial accident in modern Washington State history. OPB interviewed seven chemical safety experts who confirmed the implosion mechanism involved a blockage that prevented air backfilling the tank as liquid was pumped out, creating catastrophic negative pressure. Workers had reported a structural warning to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health two months before the disaster. No action was taken.

PTPC operates the identical kraft pulping process — the same white liquor chemistry, sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide — on 450 acres bordering Port Townsend Bay, five miles from residential neighborhoods. PTPC's daily output of 950–1,000 tons per day exceeds Nippon Dynawave's. The size, age, and inspection history of PTPC's white liquor tanks are not publicly disclosed. White liquor is exempt from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Risk Management Program — there is no required public safety plan, no mandated tank disclosure, and no worst-case release scenario on file anywhere.

PTPC's documented compliance record warrants urgent attention following Longview:

- Clean Air Act: High Priority Violation for all 12 of the last 12 consecutive quarters. Only \$99,750 in total penalties across all statutes in five years.
- Clean Water Act: documented spills into Port Townsend Bay including: 800 gallons of untreated process wastewater (November 2021–March 2022, fine \$27,000); 114,000 gallons of untreated wastewater near Glen Cove (April 2025, fine \$20,000 — less than 9 cents per gallon); and 1,000 gallons of condensed water (January 2025) — plus two additional Ecology penalties issued in 2023 for 2022 water quality violations; two new formal enforcement orders issued April and May 2026.
- Hazardous Waste (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)): June 2025 inspection found 9 violations including emergency preparedness and prevention procedure failures — the exact category that failed at Nippon Dynawave.

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permit: Expired October 2018 — The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water discharge permit expired in October 2018 and remained on administrative extension for over six years. A new permit was finally issued in May 2025 and expires in May 2030. The 6+ year gap without a valid permit is documented in EPA Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) records. into Port Townsend Bay.
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) 2024: Federal scientists confirmed hydrogen sulfide, methyl mercaptan, dimethyl sulfide, and dimethyl disulfide measured near PTPC above US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chronic health reference concentrations.

On June 1, 2026, Port Townsend Paper Company issued a public statement indicating it has met with industry experts, verified that tank vents are open and overflow lines are not submerged, and is scheduling non-destructive testing of tanks in 2026. These are welcome initial steps. They are not, however, a substitute for the independent inspection with publicly disclosed results that this community is requesting. The key questions remain unanswered: the sizes, ages, and inspection histories of PTPC's white liquor tanks are still not public information.

Federal Actions I Am Requesting:

- Request that the US Chemical Safety Board explicitly include PTPC and all remaining Washington kraft mills in the scope of the Longview investigation, with interim safety recommendations issued before the final report.
- Request that US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 — under Administrator Emma Pokon — conduct a coordinated multi-statute inspection of PTPC using Longview investigation findings as a reference framework, with results made publicly available.
- Initiate Congressional oversight hearings into the federal regulatory gap that exempts white liquor from the Risk Management Program — the exemption that left Nippon Dynawave without required public safety disclosure, and that leaves PTPC without it today.
- Advocate for US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to initiate a rulemaking review adding sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide at kraft mill concentrations to the list of extremely hazardous substances requiring Risk Management Plans.
- Advocate for federal fence-line air monitoring requirements for industrial facilities where Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has confirmed toxic emissions above chronic health reference levels — PTPC qualifies immediately under the 2024 Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) finding.

The 300 workers inside PTPC and the residents of Jefferson County are your constituents. Their safety depends on regulatory requirements that do not currently exist. I welcome a meeting or call at your convenience.

Respectfully,

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