

June 5, 2026

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senator, State of Washington
173 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2621
Seattle Office: 206-553-5545

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

Dear Senator Murray,

I am a constituent writing from Port Townsend, Washington. You stated after the Longview disaster: 'I know there's a lot of questions about how all of this happened and I want to assure you that we will all continue to pressure to get answers.' I am asking you to direct that pressure at the only remaining active kraft mill in Washington State — Port Townsend Paper Company — before another tragedy forces the question.

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 from Senator Murray:

- Use your position on the Senate Appropriations Committee to direct US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to apply Longview investigation findings immediately to all remaining Washington kraft mills, and to initiate a rulemaking review adding white liquor to the Risk Management Program.
- Request that the US Chemical Safety Board explicitly include PTPC in the scope of the Longview investigation, with interim recommendations issued before the final report.
- Advocate for federal fence-line air monitoring legislation applicable to facilities where Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has confirmed emissions above chronic health reference levels — Port Townsend qualifies now.
- Support legislation creating a federal Worker Safety Report Fast-Track requirement: worker reports of structural integrity concerns at hazardous chemical storage equipment must trigger a mandatory inspection within 30 days. The Longview sinkhole report went unanswered for two months. 11 people died.
- Request US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 Administrator Emma Pokon brief your staff on the agency's current oversight posture at PTPC and the status of PTPC's expired National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit renewal.

Jefferson County is my community and the home of 33,944 residents who live, fish, and raise families near Port Townsend Bay. I welcome the opportunity to brief your staff with my full research documentation.

Respectfully,

David Ginsberg

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