

June 5, 2026

Eron Berg, Executive Director
Port of Port Townsend
355 Hudson Street
Port Townsend WA 98368

RE: Port Townsend Paper Company White Liquor Safety — The Port Has a Direct Stake

Dear Mr. Berg,

I am writing to you as a Port Townsend resident with a simple 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 writing to you specifically because I believe the Port of Port Townsend has a direct and significant stake in whether that happens — and a voice that PTPC and our elected officials need to hear.

On May 26, 2026, eleven workers died at the Nippon Dynawave kraft paper mill in Longview, Washington when a white liquor tank imploded — the deadliest industrial accident in modern Washington State history. White liquor is a highly caustic mixture of sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide used in the kraft pulping process. Port Townsend Paper Company operates the identical process on 450 acres bordering Port Townsend Bay — the same bay where the Port operates Boat Haven Marina, Point Hudson Marina, Union Wharf, and Boat Haven Boatyard. The size, age, and inspection history of PTPC's white liquor tanks are not publicly disclosed. No law requires them to tell us.

The Port has described itself as 'a national leader in environmental stewardship' applying a triple bottom line approach — economic, environmental, and social. I write to you because a catastrophic white liquor release into Port Townsend Bay would be devastating to every one of those dimensions.

The Port's Direct Stake

- Boat Haven and Point Hudson marinas sit on Port Townsend Bay. A Longview-scale white liquor release — 600,000 gallons of caustic chemical — would contaminate the bay, close both marinas, shut down the boatyard, and destroy the marine tourism economy the Port has spent years building.
- The Port's tenants, leaseholders, and the broader marine trades economy depend entirely on a healthy Port Townsend Bay. Boat Haven alone hosts dozens of marine businesses including boat builders, repair yards, machine shops, rigging companies, dive operators, fuel docks, commercial fisheries (Key City Fish Co., New Day Fisheries), passenger ferry and

whale watch operators (Puget Sound Express), the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding, and the Port Townsend Marine Trades Association. Point Hudson Marina hosts additional tenants, restaurants, an RV park, and the Northwest Maritime Center. The Port Townsend Boatyard is one of the largest haul-out and refit facilities on Puget Sound. A white liquor release into Port Townsend Bay would shut down every one of these operations and businesses, potentially permanently.

- PTPC currently discharges 12 million gallons of treated effluent (liquid waste or wastewater discharged into the environment) into Port Townsend Bay every single day — more than all other Jefferson County dischargers combined. In April 2025, 114,630 gallons of untreated industrial wastewater spilled directly into the bay. When asked whether it was safe to eat shellfish from Glen Cove, PTPC declined to answer.
- Federal scientists from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) confirmed in 2024 that hydrogen sulfide and other sulfur compounds near PTPC exceed US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chronic health reference concentrations. This is the same chemistry that killed 11 workers in Longview one week ago.
- The Port's marine trades and boatyard economy depends on a healthy bay. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has not conducted independent shellfish tissue testing near the PTPC outfall. No one has. That gap is a risk the Port shares with every family that crab-fishes from Glen Cove.

What I Am Asking

I am not asking the Port to take a position against the mill. PTPC employs 300 people in Jefferson County — many of whom likely use Port facilities. The Port's interest is not in closing PTPC. It is in ensuring that the bay the Port depends on is protected.

- Formally write to Port Townsend Paper Company requesting independent white liquor tank inspection with public disclosure of results, quarterly independent Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) testing of bay discharge (exposing live aquatic organisms to actual discharge water to measure real biological harm), and real-time continuous monitoring of the bay outfall with a public data feed.
- Pass a Port Commission resolution expressing the Port's expectation that PTPC will take immediate proactive steps to disclose white liquor tank safety information and commission independent bay water quality testing near the PTPC outfall.
- Formally request that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) conduct independent shellfish tissue testing in Port Townsend Bay near the PTPC discharge point — particularly near Glen Cove, where Port users harvest Dungeness crab.
- Formally request that the Washington Department of Ecology conduct an immediate inspection of PTPC's white liquor storage infrastructure and make findings publicly available.
- Add your voice to the community call for the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners to establish and convene the Jefferson County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) — required by the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) since 1986, currently described on the county website as 'in its formative stage' after 35 years. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) emergency response plan for a white liquor release near Port Townsend Bay does not currently exist in any functioning form.

The Port's Triple Bottom Line framework requires considering environmental and social consequences alongside economic ones. The environmental and social consequences of continued opacity around PTPC's white liquor storage and bay discharge are not hypothetical — they are documented in federal scientific findings and illustrated by the disaster in Longview one week ago.

I have compiled extensive research documentation on PTPC's compliance record, the regulatory gaps, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) 2024 health findings, and the national context of comparable kraft mill accountability actions. I would welcome the opportunity to brief you or present to the Port Commission at your next available meeting.

Thank you for the Port's extraordinary stewardship of Port Townsend's working waterfront. I hope the Port will be a voice for the health of the bay that makes that waterfront possible.

Respectfully,

David Ginsberg

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