

WSR 24-22-116

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

[Filed November 5, 2024, 9:25 a.m.]

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**Announcing the Draft *Zostera Japonica* Management on Commercial Clam Beds in Willapa Bay General Permit for Review and Comment**

The Washington state department of ecology (ecology) proposes to reissue the *Zostera japonica* management on commercial clam beds in Willapa Bay National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and state waste discharge general permit. The current permit was last issued in March 2020 and is scheduled to expire in March 2025. The revised draft permit, along with any associated documents, which explain the legal and technical basis for the permit (permit), are available for review and public comment from November 21, 2024, at 12:00 a.m. through 11:59 p.m. on January 14, 2025. Ecology will host two informational workshops and public hearings on the draft.

**Purpose of the Permit:** The *Zostera japonica* management general permit provides coverage for the use of the herbicide imazamox to control the nonnative eelgrass *Zostera japonica* on commercial clam beds in Willapa Bay. Under the Federal Clean Water Act and State Water Pollution Control Act a permit is required for the discharge of pesticides. Individuals, businesses, and government entities that apply pesticides either directly or indirectly to waters of the state must obtain permit authorization for their discharge.

**Applying for Coverage Under the Permit:** Facilities that have applied for renewed coverage by September 4, 2024, will continue to be covered under the existing permit until the new permit is published. New or unpermitted facilities may obtain coverage under the permit by submitting a complete permit application to ecology and satisfying all applicable public notice and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements (WAC 173-226-200). Access to the application is available online at <https://ecology.wa.gov/zjaponicapermit>.

**Copies of the Draft Permit and Fact Sheet:** The draft permit and fact sheet are available online at <https://ecology.wa.gov/zjaponicapermit>. You may also request hard copies from the water quality program by contacting Jackie Lince at [jackie.lince@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:jackie.lince@ecy.wa.gov) or 360-407-6600.

**Assistance for Persons with Disabilities:** To request an ADA accommodation, contact ecology by phone at 360-407-6600 (water quality program reception), email the permit writer at [Shawn.Ultican@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Shawn.Ultican@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov> accessibility. For relay service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

**Submitting Written Comments:** Ecology will accept written comments on the draft permit from 12:00 a.m. on November 21, 2024, through January 14, 2025, by 11:59 p.m. Ecology prefers online comment submission via SmartComment. Written comments by mail must be postmarked by January 14, 2025. Comments should reference specific permit text when possible.

You can submit written comments in the following ways: Online via SmartComment at <https://wq.ecology.commentinput.com/?id=tEiRBZ59e> (preferred method); or by U.S. mail (postmarked by January 14, 2025) to Shawn Ultican, Washington Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47696, Olympia, WA 98504-7696.

**Public Workshops and Hearings:** The public workshop seeks to explain the general permit and answer questions before the formal public hearing. The hearing is an opportunity for people to give formal oral

testimony and written comments on the proposed draft permit. Oral testimony, during this time, will receive the same consideration as written comments. The public hearing will begin immediately following the public workshop and will conclude when public testimony is complete.

**Virtual Public Workshop and Hearing:** December 30, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., register for the webinar\*; and January 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., Willapa Harbor Community Center, 916 West First Street, South Bend, WA 98586.

**In-Person Public Workshop and Hearing:** \*Workshops and hearings offered via webinar allow individuals to view the presentation and provide testimony via computer or mobile device.

After ecology receives and considers all public comments, we will make a final decision on permit issuance. Ecology expects to make a decision on the general permit in the Spring of 2025.

**Questions:** If you have questions, please contact Shawn Ultican at [Shawn.Ultican@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Shawn.Ultican@ecy.wa.gov) or 360-407-6283.