



## **Anacortes Water Treatment Plant FAQ**

### **About Anacortes Water Treatment Facility**

- The City of Anacortes has been providing quality water for the past 91 years. The City owns and operates a regional water treatment plant located near Mount Vernon, on the east bank of the Skagit River.

### **Who are our customers?**

- The water treatment plant now serves around 56,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers. Customers include: The Cities of Anacortes, La Conner and Oak Harbor, Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Skagit PUD Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Shell Puget Sound Refinery and Tesoro Refinery.

### **Where does your water come from?**

- The Skagit River. The Skagit is the largest of the Puget Sound river basins. The headwaters are the snowcapped peaks of the Cascade Mountains that extend from southern British Columbia to Glacier Peak. The mainstream river runs 162 miles to the shores of the Puget Sound. The Skagit is Puget Sound's most successful salmon river.

### **Why did you build a new water treatment plant?**

- The City realized that the Anacortes Water Treatment Plant needed to modernize and increase capacity in order to address growth and service to customers. In 2013, the City replaced the previous water plant with a brand new plant on the same property on the Skagit River. The new facility is adjacent to the old facility, but they are not connected in any way. The new facility included the installation of ballasted sedimentation for pretreatment, 8 new filters, a new aboveground clearwell and a new high service pumping station. The capacity of the new plant is 42 MGD (millions of gallons per day), expandable to 55 MGD.

### **Where are the PCBs?**

- The PCBs were found while going through the process of decommissioning the old water treatment plant. They were primarily found in exterior coatings and in the caulking around windows. The use of PCBs was once common in what are now dated materials. PCBs are present only in the old water treatment plant and administration building, not the new facility that services our communities today. Small amounts of lead and arsenic were found in building materials, but were not found to have any adverse risk to public health. We are working with the Department of Ecology to help us safely manage and dispose of any materials containing PCBs.

**Why were PCBs used in the first place?**

- PCBs were commonly used because they are resistant to acids, bases and heat, so they were a sturdy material for manufacturing and building materials. PCBs were commonly used in paints, caulking, insulating material in electric equipment, inks, adhesives and other materials. Only in the late 1970s and 1980s, after the old water treatment plant was built, was their use restricted due to possible human health and environmental risks.

**When did you learn about the PCBs?**

- While conducting a demolition assessment of the old Anacortes Water Treatment Plant that is no longer in use.

**What tests did you do to determine the levels of PCB?**

- A reputable, independent toxicology consultant, Intertox, Inc. was engaged to complete a Human Health Risk Assessment of the old water treatment facility and the surrounding environment to determine the nature and extent of PCB and other compounds. The Risk Assessment was informed by other studies, including a 2015 Remedial Investigation Initial Investigation and 2016 Data Gap Investigation completed by MWH Americas, Inc. to provide data to determine the appropriate means of testing; and drinking water testing conducted since the 1970s.

**What do current and former employees need to know?**

- The Human Health Risk Assessment determined that no adverse health effects are likely to have occurred to workers, customers or visitors at the old water treatment facility.

**How could someone have come in contact with the PCBs?**

- The possibility of exposure was and continues to be exceedingly low. The typical assumed potential routes of exposure considered in environmental risks assessments include incidental ingestion of soil, sediment, dust, water or other material, or physical contact with soil sediments dust or other materials, or breathing volatilized substances or windblown dust. As the Human Health Risk Assessment determined, no adverse health effects are likely to have occurred to workers, customers, or visitors at the old water treatment plant.

**Has there ever been PCBs in the drinking water?**

- No. We have tested the water since the 1970s and we have never detected any level of PCBs in our drinking water. This remains true today.

**Is our water safe?**

- Yes. Our annual consumer water reports detail a safe, high-quality water product year after year. State and Federal regulations require that the EPA test the safety of our drinking water annually and each year the water from the Anacortes Water Treatment Plant has significantly exceeded the standards set by the EPA in each testing category.

**Are there any public health concerns?**

- No. We have concluded through a great deal of testing that the contaminants found on the site of the old water treatment plant came from the dated building materials used there. As the Human Health Risk Assessment determined, no adverse health effects are likely to have occurred to workers, customers, or visitors at the old water treatment plant.

**What is your water quality history?**

- The City of Anacortes publishes an annual consumer confidence report that provides an overview of water quality during the previous calendar year. This is done in accordance with requirements by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The Anacortes Water Treatment Facility is in full compliance with all regulations.

**Who conducts the annual water tests?**

- The Anacortes Water Treatment Plant staff conducts the annual consumer confidence report in accordance with requirements by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

**What is the next step to proceed with the clean up the PCBs?**

- We will work with the Department of Ecology to establish a remediation strategy to safely manage and dispose of any materials containing PCBs.

**How will you keep the public informed?**

- We will work with the Department of Ecology to keep our customers and the public informed. We have created a website that provides information about the cleanup. Please visit [www.safeandcleanwater.com](http://www.safeandcleanwater.com).

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