

August 7, 2006

Mr. Jay Manning, Director
Washington Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Director Manning:

As the Washington State Director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), I write to request that the Department of Ecology (Ecology) publish an updated version of the 1993 *Turning the Tide on Toxics in the Home*. PEER believes that Ecology has an obligation to the citizens of the state to provide them with information on how to dispose of hazardous household materials safely and effectively as well as offer alternatives to these chemicals.

You were informed about the problem associated with this pamphlet in a meeting that I attended at Ecology on April 17. Since that time, a search of Ecology's records has revealed that in the mid-1990s industry pressured the agency to cease publication of the document or dramatically revise it. A memorandum from the Chemical Specialties Manufacturers Association severely critiqued the pamphlet as well as an Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality document entitled *The Hazardless Home Handbook: A Guide to Hazardous Household Products and Effective Alternatives*.

The manager of Ecology's Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program evaluated industry's critique and responded in a memo dated 3/10/97 by stating "we don't think there is a problem with the information presented in the subject document" and rebutted each industry criticism. Despite staff's technical support of the document, it was pulled from publication. Subsequently, there was effort to work with industry to develop a website with comparable information but that effort collapsed. The result is that Washington state consumers have virtually no environmental education materials available to them on either alternatives to hazardous household products or means to dispose of these products.

Furthermore, Washington's response to industry pressure was in stark contrast to Oregon state's which still displays *The Hazardless Home Handbook* on its website. Page two of their document credits Washington Department of Ecology's *Turning the Tide on Toxics*

in the Home as the source material that was modified by Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality with permission and assistance of Ecology.

Under Governor Gregoire's administration, Ecology is actively pursuing solutions to restore and preserve a healthy Puget Sound. PEER strongly believes providing access to *Turning the Tide on Toxics in the Home* is essential in achieving that goal by educating Washington homeowners on means of pollution prevention. As you are well aware, an informed populace is critical in any effort to protect our natural resources.

Sincerely,

Sue Gunn, Ph.D.
Washington State Director