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Annual Environmental Cleanup Report 2026

Submitted to:
Governor Tina Kotek
Oregon Legislative Assembly
Oregon Environmental Quality Commission

DEQ

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Executive summary

This annual report is required by Oregon Revised Statute 465.235 to inform the Oregon Legislature, the Governor, and Oregon's Environmental Quality Commission of the efforts of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Environmental Cleanup Program to assess, investigate, and clean up contaminated sites. The Environmental Cleanup Program protects the health and wellbeing of people, ecosystems, and the environment in the state of Oregon by identifying, investigating, and remediating sites contaminated with hazardous substances. The program endeavors to ensure all cleaned up sites are safe for current and future use. This report also captures the Cleanup Program's efforts to modernize as we increasingly work to center the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Oregon and account for the changing realities of our state and the world, such as climate and emerging chemicals of concern.

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Accomplishments in fiscal year 2025

Since 1998, DEQ has identified almost 6,000 contaminated and potentially contaminated sites in Oregon. An additional 46 sites were identified in fiscal year 2025.

In the fiscal year ending June 2025, DEQ's Environmental Cleanup Program has issued No Further Action determinations at 31 sites across Oregon. Since the Environmental Cleanup Law was passed in 1987, NFA determinations have been made at 2,649 sites, representing over 150,000 acres of land cleaned up.

In addition to the 31 NFA determinations completed by the Environmental Cleanup Program, 642 Underground Storage Tanks were cleaned up in accordance with DEQ's UST rules. Of these, 50 were regulated petroleum fuel tanks typically located at service stations. The other 592 were Heating Oil Tanks decommissioned and cleaned up by licensed contractors.

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1. About the Environmental Cleanup Program

The Oregon DEQ Environmental Cleanup Program is modeled after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund Program. The federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act provides the foundation for the "polluter pays" principle on which the federal Superfund Program and Oregon's cleanup and hazardous waste laws are based. Oregon law authorizes DEQ to compel responsible parties to perform cleanup activities when necessary to protect human health and the environment. The law also allows DEQ to cost recover all reasonable costs attributable to or associated with the cleanup activities at contaminated sites.

The Cleanup Program focuses its efforts on site discovery, site prioritization, providing oversight for cleanup activities, and in some cases issuing orders to compel responsible parties to complete cleanups through a formal process. The Cleanup Program lists all sites and public facing data in the "Projects" section of a public online database called "Your DEQ Online," or YDO. This database went live last year and replaced our previous confirmed release list and inventory.

Today, as Oregon's population grows and its industries evolve, much of the Cleanup Program's work involves parties who voluntarily seek DEQ's oversight and associated liability protection as they clean up industrial sites to be redeveloped for new purposes.

Cleanup site prioritization

The DEQ Environmental Cleanup Program screens sites where hazardous substances may have been released to determine the need and priority for further action. A preliminary assessment may be conducted to investigate the presence and extent of contamination. Under emergency conditions, a removal action may be needed to immediately stabilize the site, prevent exposure to people and the environment, and prevent further contamination.

To determine if and how a contaminated site should be cleaned up, the program conducts a two-step investigation. The first step is a remedial investigation to determine the full nature and extent of the contamination; to evaluate risks to human health and the environment from exposure; and to determine the need for a cleanup. The second step is a feasibility study to evaluate various cleanup options for sites posing unacceptable risk. Based on this information, DEQ determines what needs to be cleaned up and how it should be done.

When the cleanup is relatively straightforward, an initial removal action may be all that is required. However, if the cleanup is more difficult and complex, DEQ may issue a formal cleanup decision called a Record of Decision after a public comment period. The resulting cleanup is called a remedial action. In addition to (or instead of) removing or treating the contamination, DEQ may install an Engineering Control (such as capping or fencing) to isolate the contamination or pursue an Institutional Control (such as administrative or legal limitation). These protective controls work to limit future activities at the site so that people and animals are not exposed to contamination.

A site receives a No Further Action designation when DEQ determines that the site poses no significant threat to people or the ecosystem. This may occur at any point during the investigation and cleanup process and may be revisited as new contaminants of concern emerge or new scientific understanding of risk is developed.

Routes to cleanup in Oregon

The DEQ Environmental Cleanup Program has several options for owners and operators of contaminated property to move through the investigation and cleanup process.

1. **Voluntary cleanup:** The most common option is voluntary cleanup. Most financial institutions will not provide financing for site purchase or redevelopment if there is known or suspected contamination that has not been addressed. Property owners seeking a signoff from DEQ agree to have DEQ Cleanup Program project managers oversee their projects to ensure that their work meets regulatory requirements. Parties intending to purchase property with existing contamination may enter into a Prospective Purchaser Agreement with DEQ prior to purchase that describes the cleanup actions they will perform at the property in exchange for protections from liability from DEQ and third parties for any remaining contamination. One of the most important requirements for parties to be eligible for a PPA is that the cleanup action must provide substantial public benefit.
2. **Site assessment:** DEQ also discovers contaminated properties through site assessment. DEQ learns about potential contamination from complaints, unsolicited reports, and other DEQ programs or government agencies in addition to conducting its own inquiries. DEQ evaluates and ranks sites based on their known or potential threats. Responsible parties are encouraged to address site contamination through voluntary cleanup. DEQ will require parties with high priority sites to conduct investigation and cleanup under the terms of a legally enforceable order.
3. **Industrial Orphan Site cleanup:** Where responsible parties are unknown, unwilling, or unable to perform a cleanup, DEQ may designate the site as an Orphan site and oversee

the cleanup of those sites with limited Industrial Orphan funding through environmental contractors.

4. **Other:** Other types of cleanups are conducted under separate statutory authority. Examples include: DEQ's Cleanup program addresses petroleum releases from underground storage tanks while meeting additional federal and state requirements; DEQ's Emergency Response program ensures new hazardous material spills are immediately cleaned up by the responsible party; and, through state superfund agreements, EPA may clean up sites on the national priorities list.

Funding environmental cleanup

The Environmental Cleanup Program does not receive general or lottery funds from the legislature. Environmental Cleanup is a cost-recovery program based on the polluter pays principle. Responsible parties are invoiced for DEQ's oversight activities as the primary funding mechanism for the program. A more detailed breakdown of the costs to operate the program, the revenue sources, and the challenges of the current funding model follow.

Costs

Generally, in order to prioritize and complete effective cleanups across the state, there are two categories of cleanup costs: direct site-specific costs and programmatic costs. Direct site-specific costs are those associated with work on an individual site, both for remedial action activities and direct Cleanup Program oversight. Programmatic costs are all those associated with maintaining a functioning program that can effectively support the direct oversight activities, but are not attributable to any one specific site, such as general technical assistance, fiscal analysis and reporting, maintaining/developing updated regulations and policies based in current science, staff training and professional development, rulemaking, management activities, intake, site discovery, and legal support.

Direct costs

Direct site-specific costs for staff oversight time on voluntary or legally enforced cleanups, such as those discovered through site assessment, are invoiced to a responsible party, with few exceptions.

Direct costs for Orphan sites that present unacceptable risk to human health and the environment but have no responsible party to fund the needed cleanup are funded by Industrial Orphan bond authority approved by the legislature.

Federal superfund sites or those on the National Priorities List may be cleaned up with federal funds but require a state funding match, usually 10% of the construction costs, with the state taking on ongoing staff time and contracted costs associated with oversight and maintenance after the cleanup is completed. The state portion of direct costs for federal superfund sites, including the match and ongoing oversight and maintenance costs, are drawn from the Orphan bond funding.

Other types of cleanups follow this pattern, with direct site work and oversight costs being invoiced to a responsible party, a federal fund source such as a grant, or some limited state funding in the form of Orphan bond proceeds.

Programmatic costs

Programmatic costs, or indirect costs, are those activities that cannot be invoiced directly to a specific site. These include support functions such as policy and program development, staff management, fiscal and legal activities, and the other activities necessary for ongoing program function. These costs are funded by a complex braiding of revenue sources, including cost recovery in the form of an indirect rate paid by responsible parties for cleanup oversight, hazardous waste disposal fees, federal grants, and limited Orphan bond sales.

Revenues

The Environmental Cleanup Program is an entirely other funded program. Revenues for the program are made up of four primary revenue sources. The majority of revenue comes from cost recovery by invoicing responsible parties for DEQ oversight of cleanup work at sites. Fees, federal grants, and the proceeds of Industrial Orphan bond sales each provide a portion of the revenue. The below sections go into more detail for each revenue type.

Cost recovery

Much of the DEQ Environmental Cleanup Program's programmatic costs are funded through cost recovery from the responsible parties (owners and operators) performing cleanup activities through DEQ oversight. This is done by DEQ staff tracking their hours and invoicing the responsible party. This invoice is inclusive of an indirect rate percentage to account for indirect and programmatic costs. Cleanup is expensive and can take many years, and responsible parties are often interested in negotiating a settlement agreement that will resolve their liability for a lump sum. This settlement account pays for direct costs and contracted services and is under DEQ's direct oversight.

Fees

Fees pay a small portion of Environmental Cleanup Program costs, and fee revenue has declined in recent years. Senate Bill 57, (2021 legislature), updated the fees collected at the hazardous waste landfill near Arlington which help support the Environmental Cleanup Program. DEQ uses a portion of this fee revenue to meet federal grant match requirements.

Federal funds

Grants, primarily from EPA, support cleanup work in several ways. DEQ uses grants to fund programmatic costs, such as: the development and administration of the statewide program; support for efforts to develop brownfield sites; payment for federal-level site assessments and brownfield assessments; and staff participation in decisions related to EPA Superfund sites in Oregon. The U.S. military also provides some funding through a cooperative agreement for DEQ's oversight of cleanups at military facilities.

The Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund is an additional federal fund available to address petroleum releases from federally regulated underground storage tanks. These funds are accessed to support Underground Storage Tank cleanup and prevention through a formal assistance agreement.

Industrial Orphan bond sales and other revenue sources

For priority sites where responsible parties have not been identified, or where the responsible parties are unable or unwilling to finance the cost of cleanup, DEQ may use the proceeds from legislatively authorized Industrial Orphan bonds to pay for the work. In the 2023 legislative session, DEQ received a total authorization of $10.3 million to pay for both Orphan remediation work and expenses associated with the bond sales. DEQ has strategically timed our bond sale to maximize revenue, minimize associated costs, and ensure uninterrupted access to funding for the investigation and cleanup of known and new high priority sites through the 2025-2027 biennium.

DEQ will continue funding Industrial Orphan sites presenting significant risks to people or the environment where responsible party resources are unavailable. Subject to the availability of funds, DEQ will also consider using Orphan funds to complete site cleanups rather than simply stabilize contamination and to address eligible sites where development potential is significant.

Since 1991, DEQ has recovered in excess of $10 million of past expenditures from responsible parties and their insurance companies. DEQ continues to pursue recovery of past Orphan expenses to maximize funding available to perform cleanup activities at current and future Orphan sites.

Funding challenges

The Environmental Cleanup program's polluter pays, cost recovery funding model has the benefit of mostly relieving the taxpayers of the state from the financial burden of cleaning up contamination caused by industries. Over time, however, heavy reliance on this funding model has created a few challenges.

Lack of staffing stability

Many sites enter the voluntary cleanup pathway in order to be redeveloped or sold. This activity is highly vulnerable to economic upturns and downturns, which can generate abrupt increases and decreases in the need for project oversight, leading to staffing instability including periods of rapid hiring or reductions in force. Environmental Cleanup project managers, toxicologists, environmental engineers, and hydrogeologists are highly trained and specialized and very time consuming to hire, train, and fully onboard. Additionally, the focus to secure programmatic funding on sites that have more redevelopment potential over sites with less (such as those that might exist in less wealthy or marginalized communities) has the long-term impact of disproportionately increased exposure risk to those already most vulnerable portions of our population.

Increasing costs of cleanup

The cost to clean up a single site can range from several thousands to millions of dollars, and there are thousands of such sites in Oregon. Determining who pays for cleanup is complicated, but the foundation of the polluter pays principle intends the burden of cleanup to first fall on the responsible party or parties. Under Oregon law, current property owners and all former operators of a site are considered potentially responsible parties and are strictly liable for funding all reasonable cleanup costs to reach a level of acceptable risk where practical (ORS 465.255). State and federal cleanup laws are retroactive, meaning contamination that occurred under past common operating practices, or sites with a level of contamination or a substance that was previously thought to be safe when the risks associated with exposure were less understood, can still result in the current owner(s) or operator(s) being compelled to undertake an expensive cleanup. Many responsible parties are unwilling or unable to pay the cleanup costs, resulting in enhanced collection efforts, costly litigation uncertain to recover funds, or a need to fund priority projects through limited Orphan funding.

Cleanup work is getting more expensive. This is due to many factors including inflation, and increased real costs including wages, material and disposal. Historical settlements that failed to adequately account for inflation over time or forecast increases to contracting costs may not

cover the full final cost of the project, leaving a project unfinished or requiring an additional (state or federal) funding source to bring to completion.

As mentioned above, states must contribute 10 percent of EPA's remedial action costs and 100% of long-term oversight and maintenance costs at NPL sites with no viable responsible parties. As NPL sites close and new ones are opened the State match requirement for Superfund sites is ever increasing.

Static or declining revenues

Generally, federal grant funds are decreasing or remain static. As an example, DEQ was awarded a five-year grant from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2023 which was anticipated to provide roughly $1 million per year for program development. However, the allocation awarded for the 2026 fiscal year was only just over $500 thousand, with further reductions anticipated. Fees and Industrial Orphan bond authority proceeds have also remained static for several decades.

Impacts over time

Since the creation of the Environmental Cleanup program over three decades ago, direct cleanup costs and the programmatic costs to maintain an effective program have increased while the funding has remained mostly static. The Environmental Cleanup program has eliminated positions, optimized processes, adjusted subprograms, reassigned staff duties, and renegotiated expectations to try to meet the expanding needs.

Overall, these factors have seen a decline in the size and capacity of the program. For example, the 2001-2003 Legislatively Adopted Budget had 99.3 FTE positions associated with the Environmental Cleanup Program compared to the 2025-2027 LAB, which has 61 FTE. The Environmental Cleanup Program continues to pursue efforts to modernize the program to improve efficiencies and identify cost savings to help address some of these factors.

2. Program highlights for fiscal year 2025

DEQ's Environmental Cleanup program had many successes in the fiscal year. The Cleanup Program has continued progress on ongoing program priorities, including DEQ-led cleanup actions for sites throughout Oregon through site assessment, voluntary cleanup actions, funding cleanup at Orphan sites, brownfields projects and milestones, and Prospective Purchaser Agreements.

The program also began or continued work on several policy and program development initiatives, including:

- A rulemaking to address per- and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances contamination
- Continuing a fiscal framework project started in the previous fiscal year
- Completing updates to the program's Vapor Intrusion Guidance
- Updating the Cleanup Program's risk-based concentrations
- Assessing the ongoing effectiveness of Institutional and Engineering Controls
- Charter development for the Program Management Team

Work continued on the second phase of a program modernization initiative (further detailed in "Cleanup 2050 Strategic Planning Project" in Section 3) which involves a comprehensive outreach campaign to gather external feedback about the Cleanup Program from marginalized communities and Tribal Nations across Oregon. By involving diverse voices throughout this visioning and strategic planning process, the Cleanup Program will develop a strategic plan that substantially shifts the direction of the program to be more protective of marginalized communities, center environmental justice in guidance updates, and undertake increasingly proactive outreach with communities in the future.

Policy and program development

PFAS rulemaking and cleanup work

The Environmental Cleanup Program is an agency-wide leader in establishing DEQ's next steps to address per- and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances contamination of Oregon's air, land, and water, and the program actively participates in DEQ's cross-program PFAS Workgroup. In fiscal year 2025, DEQ's PFAS Workgroup continued to evaluate the best approaches for addressing PFAS environmental contamination, including continuing development of a draft DEQ PFAS

Strategic Plan, coordinating efforts between programs, tracking PFAS data of known and potential sources, and staying current on PFAS science and regulatory developments.

During fiscal year 2025, the Cleanup Program continued a rulemaking process with the intent to designate certain PFAS as Oregon hazardous substances, following on EPA's April 2024 listing of PFOA and PFOS as CERCLA hazardous substances. A successful rulemaking will ensure the program has the authority to require reporting of releases, investigation and risk assessment, and cleanup action where significant risk to public health or the environment is identified. Activities completed between July 2024 and June 2025 included:

- Creating and convening an external Rulemaking Advisory Committee representing a wide array of interests
- Publishing a public notice package, holding a public notice period, and holding two public hearings to gather feedback on this proposed rule in April 2025
- Writing a staff report to present the proposed rulemaking to the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission in July 2025. DEQ Cleanup staff will return to present and request adoption of the proposed rulemaking to the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission in September 2025.

The Cleanup Program currently oversees multiple PFAS investigations, which are conducted on a voluntary basis with various parties including the Department of Defense, municipalities, ports, and industry. Some investigations are DEQ-led or collaborations with other local, state, and federal partners, including an expanded preliminary assessment of groundwater in Portland's Columbia South Shore Wellfield and a multi-agency fish tissue study in various Oregon waterbodies. To date, investigations have primarily focused on soil and groundwater contamination. In addition, the Cleanup PFAS Technical Workgroup has begun efforts to inventory potential PFAS release sites, including database mining, GIS mapping, and coordinating with other DEQ programs. Prioritization of outreach to potentially responsible parties for information and sampling will begin with sites deemed most likely to have released PFAS based on industry type and historical practices, as well as sites upgradient of known drinking water impacts.

Fiscal framework project

DEQ evaluated the Environmental Cleanup Program's funding structure and developed a summary of program funding areas, a timeline of significant program milestones, and initial recommendations on improving program financial stability in the medium and long term. The program continues the efforts of implementing those recommendations. Last year, after years of development and testing, the program launched the Cleanup module of Your DEQ Online. This agency-wide project upgrades and streamlines the way we accept, process, and share

information within DEQ, with the public, and with the regulated community. Additionally, DEQ has continued its efforts to optimize our usage of Workday Payroll and is developing and testing a replacement for the Cost Recovery Invoice System, which is an obsolescent, two decades-old database. The new invoice system will modernize invoicing and communication, have more robust reporting and analytical tools to help us make better and more timely fiscal determinations, and aid in long-term financial strategizing and forecasting. These investments, combined with simplifying various fiscal processes, are necessary elements in stabilizing the program's budget.

Vapor Intrusion Guidance update

The DEQ Cleanup Program published its revised Vapor Intrusion Guidance in March 2025. The 2025 revision is the guidance's first update since 2010 and includes substantial revisions to align with current science, standards of practice, and the EPA's vapor intrusion screening levels. The revisions reflect internal and external review and feedback, including listening sessions and a three-month informal public review period. The revised guidance will improve DEQ's ability to protect people in Oregon, especially those most at risk, from health risks associated with vapor intrusion. DEQ announced the publication of revised Vapor Intrusion Guidance internally and externally and maintains an updated website where it can be accessed.

Between July 2024 to June 2025, the Vapor Intrusion Workgroup completed key steps to reach this milestone, including the final technical review, management approval review, document copy editing review, and accessibility review and updates. In particular, the Vapor Intrusion Workgroup considered and incorporated feedback received during the informal public review period that ended in June 2024. The Vapor Intrusion Workgroup also updated revised Vapor Intrusion Risk-Based Concentration Screening levels, based on EPA's November 2024 update to its screening levels for vapor intrusion. Members of the Vapor Intrusion Workgroup also shared updates to internal groups and externally at the December 2024 Business and Environment Conference in Portland.

Toxicology update

The DEQ Toxicology Workgroup is updating the Environmental Cleanup Program's human health screening levels, which are referred to as the program's risk-based concentrations, by combining chemical risk data used in EPA's Regional Screening Levels and Oregon-specific information. This comprehensive update of all human health RBCs is the first since 2018, incorporating updated toxicological and exposure science to better protect human health in Oregon from the risks associated with hazardous substances in the environment. The updated RBCs will be available in a digital format that provides a singular repository of RBCs for over eight hundred chemicals across all the default exposure pathways that DEQ evaluates in the

Cleanup Program to protect human health. DEQ toxicologists anticipate using the streamlined digital RBC table format to regularly update human health RBCs on an annual basis using EPA RSLs as a primary source for chemical risk data, to provide the most up-to-date, science-based information to support the Cleanup Program's goal of protecting human health and the environment in Oregon. The new digital RBC table will provide both cancer and noncancer screening values for each chemical, which will streamline the risk assessment process and provide greater transparency for responsible parties, consultants, communities, and other interested parties.

During the technical update process, the Toxicologist Workgroup has conferred with the Hydrogeologist Workgroup, lead workers, the Program Management Team, and the communications team to ensure that the RBC updates are science-based, implementable, and accompanied by appropriate internal and external training. In addition, the Toxicologist Workgroup has provided preliminary training opportunities for Cleanup Program staff to obtain feedback on the proposed RBC table format and ease of use. The Toxicology Workgroup is in the final stages of technical updates and will seek PMT approval near the end of 2025.

PMT charter development

The Program Management Team is the proverbial "board of directors" for the Cleanup Program. It is made up of the Land Quality Administrator and eight program managers from across the regional and headquarters offices. The development of a charter was prioritized this year to increase communication, transparency, accountability, and consistency of programmatic decisions. This charter development process helped strengthen the relationships between the Cleanup Program, Emergency Response Program, and Underground Storage Tank Program, which will improve collaboration between these programs on cleanup sites in the future.

Institutional and Engineering Control inspection project

The Cleanup Program is using current Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding to update the 1998 OR DEQ Guidance for Use of Institutional Controls and accompanying internal management directive. Cleanup is creating a template for reviewing a backlog of previously closed sites to determine if ICs/ECs are being maintained, and what, if any, corrective actions are needed to ensure site protectiveness. Implementation of ICs/ECs is done to prevent unacceptable exposures to contamination left in place at the completion of remedial or removal actions. Over 700 sites throughout Oregon have ICs/ECs, ranging from deed restrictions to physical barriers such as caps or fencing. While effective at preventing exposure to residual contamination, these controls are only protective if they are regularly inspected and maintained. As this work is currently federally funded by an IIJA grant which is set to sunset in 2027, and given the large workload and importance of the site review process, it will be necessary for the

Cleanup Program to identify and acquire funding sources and permanent position authority to continue this work in the future.

Environmental Justice Workgroup

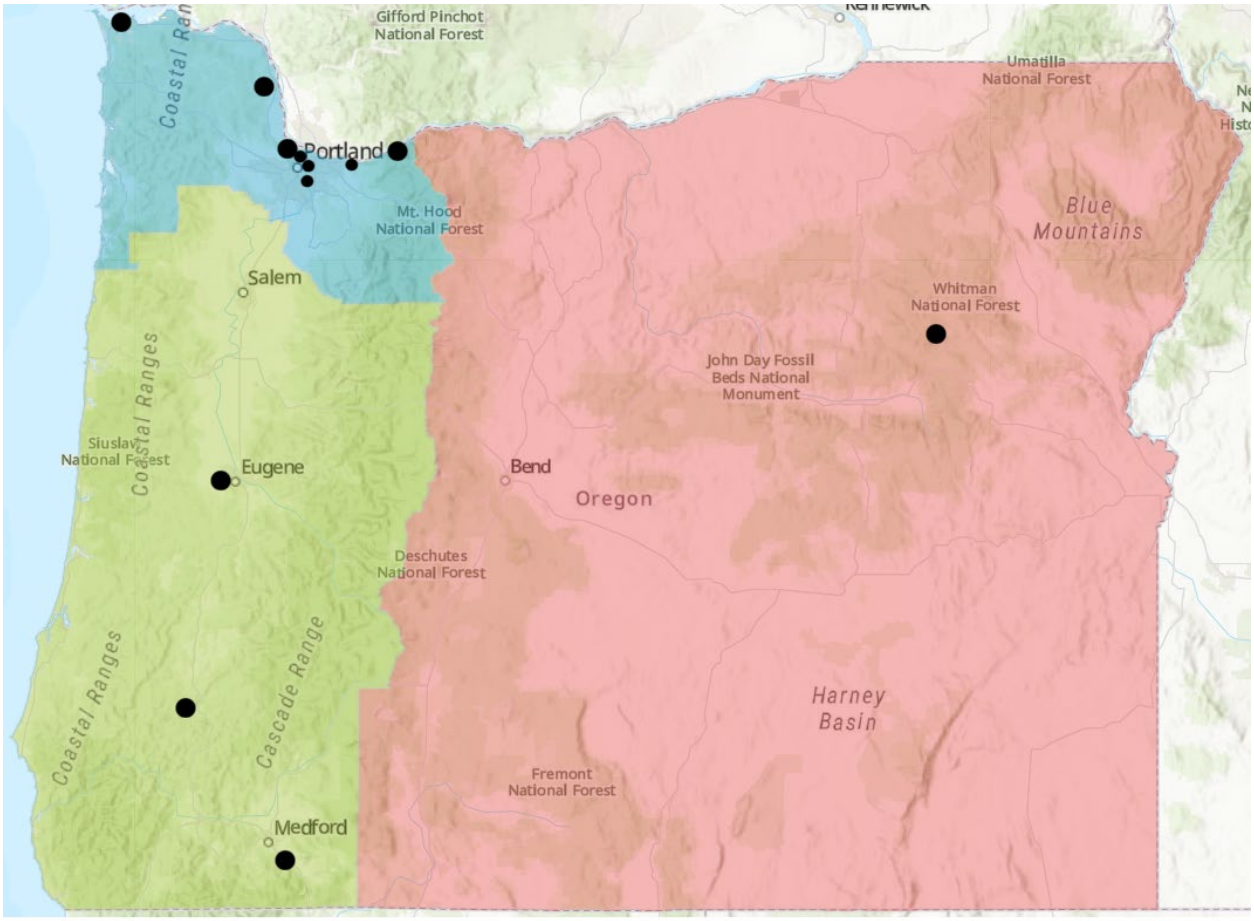
Members of the Environmental Cleanup Program continued to be active participants and hold leadership roles in DEQ's agency-wide staff-led Environmental Justice Workgroup. This included Environmental Cleanup Program staff leading the EJWG's Community Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee, actively participating in the EJWG's Technical and Policy Subcommittees, and actively participating in the EJWG Planning Committee and Leadership Coordination Committee. Staff have been working to improve environmental justice community engagement practices across the entirety of DEQ's work, including developing a protocol for compensating community partners and laying the groundwork to develop a resource library to support effective community engagement guided by EJ principles. Cleanup staff also coordinated an EJ in Cleanup subgroup focused on incorporating EJ principles into the Cleanup Program.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity and Belonging

The Environmental Cleanup Program is committed to incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging principles and values into its work. We strive to ensure that programmatic work is consistent with and supports EPA's Justice 40 requirements by prioritizing sites using environmental and climate justice screening tools. Members of the Environmental Cleanup Program continue to hold participation and leadership roles in DEQ's DEI Council and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Affinity group; actively participate in DEQ's Pride Affinity group, agency DEI plan, and various DEQ allyship groups; work closely with DEQ's Retention and Recruitment Committee; and have started a Disability Affinity Group within DEQ.

Statewide priority cleanup sites

In fiscal year 2025, DEQ made significant progress on many cleanup sites across the state. The specific sites highlighted in this report are shown on the following map, organized by region. This report and map are not inclusive of all cleanup sites in our inventory.



Northwest Region

- Time Oil Company NW Terminal (Former), Portland
- Bradford Island, Columbia River
- Former Boise White Paper, St. Helens
- Portland Harbor Superfund, Portland
- GASCO Manufactured Gas Plant, Portland
- Port of Astoria, Astoria
- Willamette Cove Uplands, Portland
- McCormick & Baxter Superfund Site, Portland
- Columbia Slough, Portland

Western Region

- J.H. Baxter, Eugene
- Ashland Rail Yard, Ashland
- Formosa Mine, Douglas County

Eastern Region

- Congo Gulch Mine, Grant County

Time Oil Company NW Terminal (Former), Portland

TOC Holdings, owner of the former Time Oil Northwest Terminal in North Portland, declared bankruptcy in 2017. In 2021, DEQ negotiated a Prospective Purchaser Agreement with a new buyer after several previous purchase attempts had been unsuccessful. In exchange for a waiver of liability from legacy environmental contamination, provided by the PPA, DEQ required the buyer to perform significant remedial actions to address remaining contaminants. Remediation work included excavation of 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and placement into an on-site, fully encapsulated containment cell, and decommissioning of a private storm sewer that transmitted contaminated groundwater to the Willamette River. With remediation work complete, DEQ prepared a Certificate of Completion for the PPA in March 2023.

In fiscal year 2025, DEQ worked with contractors, consultants, and Portland General Electric to construct a large energy storage facility using lithium-ion batteries tied to the regional electrical grid. This battery bank stores 200 MW of energy to improve regional electrical grid resilience. This battery, in conjunction with two other large battery facilities, can provide four hours of electrical energy to 300,000 Portland homes at peak demand. Work in the fiscal year included completion of grid power linkage to a new substation, build out and wiring of the battery bank, final site grading, vegetating stormwater swales and flood basin, and final groundwater monitoring. The battery bank at the former Time Oil Northwest Terminal is called the Seaside facility and was placed online by Portland General Electric in June 2025.

Bradford Island, Columbia River

EPA added Bradford Island to the National Priorities List in 2022 with a goal of more effective and rapid progress. This significant site on the Columbia River is contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, and despite past efforts to remove known sources of contamination, PCBs continue to be present at high concentrations in fish.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is currently completing additional sampling to supplement the remedial investigation for upland contamination on Bradford Island and the Columbia River

under a Federal Facilities Agreement that was executed in September 2024. These sampling efforts include in-river sampling and upland groundwater sampling. The presence of PCBs in deep groundwater was of particular interest. The investigation work is anticipated to finish in 2026. In parallel with the supplemental sampling efforts, the US Army Corps of Engineers will implement a non-time-critical removal action in 2026 to remove known upland contamination on Bradford Island uplands. An Action Memorandum describing the scope of the non-time-critical removal action is planned to be finalized in August 2025.

Former Boise White Paper, St. Helens

The former Boise White Paper site is located in St. Helens, Oregon, just upstream of where the Multnomah Channel joins the main stem of the Columbia River. The site operated as a bleached-pulp paper mill for decades, resulting in contamination of Multnomah Channel sediments by polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins/furans, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, and metals. In March 2023, DEQ issued a Record of Decision selecting enhanced natural recovery (with amendments) and monitored natural recovery as the preferred remedial alternative for Multnomah Channel sediments in Sediment Areas 1 through 3. OfficeMax, LLC, the site's current responsible party, completed a Phase 1 Pre-design Investigation, consisting of surface sediment and riverbank soil sampling, between December 2024 and May 2025. A Phase 2 PDI workplan will be submitted in Spring 2026 for likely implementation in late 2026. Based on the current schedule, DEQ anticipates sediment remedy construction in 2028 or 2029.

Portland Harbor Superfund, Portland

The Portland Harbor Superfund site is located in the Lower Willamette River, stretching approximately 10 miles from River Mile 2 to River Mile 12. DEQ provides technical support and works to ensure Oregon state rules are applied to the project in support of EPA, which is the lead agency working on cleaning up pollution in the river. DEQ leads the work controlling contaminants in contaminated lands along the river (upland areas) to prevent recontamination of the river following EPA's in-water cleanup. EPA's Record of Decision, issued in January 2017, relies on the upland and upriver pollution control work DEQ is conducting as part of the overall strategy for addressing contamination at the site. In fiscal year 2025, DEQ solicited input on multiple upland source control-related documents and on a proposed source control decision. EPA is overseeing progress on remedial design of the cleanup at 18 individual project areas within the site with the goal of entering into an agreement to begin implementing the cleanup by 2027.

GASCO Manufactured Gas Plant, Portland

From 1913 to 1956, the Portland Gas & Coke Company (Gasco) owned and operated a Manufactured Gas Plant processing facility on an approximately 80-acre property. One half of that property is currently owned by NW Natural (the Gasco Site), and the other half, known as the Allen Tract, is now owned by Siltronic Corporation (Siltronic Property). Leaseholds on the Gasco site have historically been used by companies involved in coal tar, creosote, and pitch operations, and for storage and distribution of marine fuel. NW Natural now uses the Gasco Site for a liquefied natural gas operation and a marine fuel storage/distribution terminal.

Historical MGP production generated large quantities of byproducts and waste, which were used as fill across the Gasco Site and Siltronic Property and discharged into unlined ponds and the Willamette River. After the end of MGP operations, coal tar, creosote, and pitch waste were released into soil and groundwater in the southern portion of the Gasco site. Wafer manufacturing on the Siltronic Property involved the use of solvents, which caused soil and groundwater contamination across that portion of the site.

NW Natural entered a voluntary cleanup agreement with DEQ in 1994 to complete the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study process. NW Natural submitted a draft Feasibility Study to DEQ at the end of 2024. DEQ provided comments on the draft Feasibility Study in June 2025 and anticipates receiving a revised Feasibility Study in the first half of 2026. In parallel with completing the Feasibility Study phase of the project, NW Natural and DEQ have begun the design of an Interim Removal Action Measure that includes an in-situ stabilization and solidification barrier wall along the Willamette River shoreline, hydraulic controls for groundwater behind the barrier wall, and ISS treatment of dense non-aqueous phase liquid in a zone adjacent to the shoreline. NW Natural is currently collecting data to support the interim measure design, and DEQ anticipates finalizing the Interim Removal Action Measure Basis of Design Report in 2026.

Port of Astoria, Astoria

On December 14, 2001, DEQ issued Unilateral Order ECSR-NWR-01-11 to address multiple sources of petroleum contamination in an area identified as the Astoria Area-Wide Petroleum Site. The order was issued to nine respondents that owned or operated facilities where releases of petroleum products occurred, including the facility at the Port of Astoria, five former bulk-fuel facilities, six former service stations, and one utility-fleet garage located between Highway 101 and the Columbia River. The order required completion of a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study and Interim Removal Action Measures as appropriate.

Following completion of the site-wide remedial investigation, the site was divided into five areas of concern based on historic use and nature of contamination to facilitate subsequent feasibility studies and cleanups.

Since 2001, the site facilities in AOCs 1, 2, 3, and 5 have completed their investigations and cleanups, and most have been returned to productive use. DEQ has issued eight No Further Action determinations to date. For AOC 4, the Port of Astoria completed a remedial investigation and feasibility study, and DEQ issued a Record of Decision in June 2019. The Port finalized negotiations with other responsible parties in a consent judgment and began their remedial design work in May 2022. DEQ approved the remedial design work plan for construction of a groundwater-permeable reactive barrier, a sediment cap, and soil vapor controls in December 2022. In fiscal year 2025, after review discussions with DEQ on an alternative remedy design proposal, the Port is preparing additional information to the design proposal to meet the requirements of the ROD in conjunction with planned bulkhead infrastructure improvements to Slip 2.

Willamette Cove Uplands, Portland

DEQ issued a Record of Decision in 2021 for the Willamette Cove Uplands property situated on the east bank of the Willamette River, north of the Railroad Bridge in Portland's Cathedral Park neighborhood. The property has a history of development and use spanning over 100 years. Soil contamination throughout the approximately 20-acre upland area exceeds acceptable levels for both human health and the environment, including elevated levels of dioxins and furans, metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and polychlorinated biphenyls. After cleanup, Metro has plans to redevelop the property as a nature park that supports plants and animals, offering people a connection with nature along the Willamette River.

Remedial design is underway at the uplands of Willamette Cove and the in-water portion overseen by EPA as part of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. In 2022, the Port of Portland, which formerly owned the property, and Metro completed a comprehensive remedial design investigation. Using this information, the Port of Portland and Metro completed a Basis of Design Report which presents their overall approach for implementing the upland cleanup. The next deliverable is a 30% remedial design, and supplemental remedial design sampling is planned for 2026 to inform the final remedial design.

McCormick & Baxter Superfund Site, Portland

DEQ and EPA have worked on the McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co. Superfund Site cleanup for many decades, and the site is ready for reuse. The site is in North Portland between the

University of Portland's Franz River Campus and Metro's future Willamette Cove nature park, which includes 41 acres of land along the Willamette River and 23 acres of in-water habitat.

DEQ received a Prospective Purchaser Agreement application from Portland Botanical Gardens to purchase and redevelop the property in May 2024. Their proposal includes a ticketed botanical garden on a portion of the property, a public greenway along the waterfront, an interpretive plant garden, and a semi-public open gathering space. DEQ has been in conversations with Portland Botanical Gardens to evaluate their proposal and negotiate the proposed PPA since receiving the application. DEQ also engaged with Tribes and communities since then to share updates, answer questions, and collect feedback on what they would like to see in a PPA and the property overall.

These conversations helped inform various conditions of the proposed PPA, which requires Portland Botanical Gardens to meet certain requirements before the property transaction can occur. The PPA will go out for formal public comment on December 1, 2025.

Columbia Slough, Portland

For over 100 years, industrial, agricultural and urban development along the Columbia Slough resulted in contamination accumulating in the bottom of the slough. Contaminated slough sediments between Moore & Wright Islands and the former Pacific Carbide facility represent an in-water area that must be addressed as part of the Columbia Slough cleanup plan. Pacific Carbide was developed in the 1940s and operated as a calcium carbide manufacturing plant until 1987. Prior to and during the 1970s, significant amounts of waste material entered the Columbia Slough through discharge pipes and bank failures adjacent to the slough. In 2013, Pacific Carbide entered into a consent judgment with DEQ to implement an upland soil cleanup remedy and pay into the Lower Columbia Slough settlement account to address the in-water sediment contamination.

In 2023, DEQ and Department of State Lands applied for and received a $1 million EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant to assist with the cost of cleanup. DSL and DEQ entered into an Interagency Agreement to perform the work. DSL administered the Brownfield Grant funds, and DEQ managed day-to-day grant activities and the in-water cleanup.

In fiscal year 2025, DEQ performed planning and site preparation, including removal of bank vegetation and placing erosion controls on the site, in order to install an in-water sediment cap in the slough in summer 2025. This cap will be implemented near the Moore and Wright Islands in north Portland and is expected to span three acres, removing impacted bank and soil to restore the shoreline habitat.

J.H. Baxter, Eugene

This 31-acre site in Eugene was an active wood treatment facility since the early 1940s, until J.H. Baxter & Co. ceased operations on January 31, 2022. When active, the facility produced treated wood products such as utility poles and railroad ties. Spills and operational practices over the years resulted in soil and groundwater contamination and air emissions concerns. When the facility closed in 2022, large quantities of hazardous waste were left in tanks, containers, and equipment on site.

Between 2020 and 2023, DEQ and EPA sampled 62 residential yards for dioxins, a group of toxic chemicals that can be associated with wood-treating chemicals. Soil sampling identified 11 yards above both DEQ's residential cleanup levels and an OHA priority cleanup level to protect children under 6 years old. In 2024, DEQ completed soil cleanup at seven residential properties, which included excavation and disposal of contaminated soil, replacing it with clean soil. The residential cleanup work at these seven properties was funded through DEQ's Industrial Orphan Site Account. Due to the high threat of release and risk to public health and the environment, on August 5, 2024, EPA began a CERCLA Time Critical Removal Action at the J.H Baxter facility to remove the hazardous wastes left on site by J.H. Baxter. As of summer 2025, transport and disposal operations in support of the EPA Time Critical Removal Action are ongoing and have cost more than $10 million to date. Nearly all hazardous materials that were left on the site have been removed.

EPA is expected to become the lead agency for performing removal and remedial actions in July 2025 as the site is placed on its National Priorities List. DEQ will transition into a supporting role for the cleanup and will continue to maintain involvement consistent with CERCLA and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan. Anticipated activities include support of EPA and its contractors on the technical evaluation of the site, engagement with the community, and coordination with state and local entities.

Ashland Rail Yard, Ashland

This 21-acre rail yard was operated by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company for nearly 100 years as a locomotive fueling, maintenance, and railcar repair facility near downtown Ashland, until 1986. Over the past 30 years, environmental investigations of the rail yard have shown that soil and groundwater in portions of the property are contaminated with several heavy metals and petroleum products and byproducts. The contamination is at levels that may pose a health risk to people working or living on the rail yard.

Union Pacific merged with Southern Pacific in 1996 and joined DEQ's Voluntary Cleanup Program. DEQ has worked closely with Union Pacific and City of Ashland representatives to

develop an appropriate cleanup plan. In 2017, there was a change to the environmental cleanup levels that reduced the area subject to cleanup. This required a new risk assessment, feasibility study, and cleanup plan. After a rigorous public comment period, DEQ gained support from the community and Ashland City Council for the proposed cleanup plan.

The site covered under this cleanup plan is an 11.7-acre area located on the central portion of the former rail yard property. The plan includes excavation of contaminated soil from the western 8.7-acre area of the site, consolidation on the eastern three-acre area of the site, covering contaminated soil with a protective vegetated cap, and site use restrictions. The new cleanup plan will allow the rail yard to be safely developed for industrial, commercial, or urban residential use. In 2024, DEQ prepared the final Record of Decision and entered into a Voluntary Agreement for Remedial Design and Remedial Action. UPRR has selected a contractor and is finalizing the remedial design for implementation in spring 2026.

Formosa Mine, Douglas County

Acid mine drainage from the abandoned Formosa Mine site has contaminated Middle and South Fork Middle Creeks, tributaries of Cow Creek, in the South Umpqua River Basin of Douglas County. The site consists of over 17,000 linear feet of underground workings co-located on private and public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. This former copper-zinc mine is a source of highly acidic discharges with elevated concentrations of heavy metals. At least three miles of prime coho and steelhead habitat in Middle Creek have been adversely impacted by the mine contamination.

The mine was operated into the early 1990s by Formosa Exploration, Inc. and was abandoned in 1996. Since its closure, BLM and DEQ completed a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study, characterized the site, and evaluated cleanup alternatives. EPA placed the site on its National Priorities List in September 2007 and is now the lead agency for performing CERCLA removal and remedial actions. BLM assisted EPA with installation of the Formosa 1 (F1) Adit and decant cells. DEQ and BLM assisted EPA with completion of the mine waste remedial design and risk assessments for groundwater and surface water.

In fiscal year 2025, EPA updated the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study of the impacted surface water and groundwater. EPA has secured funding, and the remedial design for encapsulation of the acid-generating mine waste will be implemented in 2026 if it is not delayed by current BLM actions. Without EPA approval or DEQ concurrence, BLM recently removed the F1 Adit treatment cells and plans to decommission the F1 Adit entirely by 2026 because it is on BLM property. EPA no longer has control of the mine water discharge from the F1 Adit, and there will no longer be an accessible adit at the site. It is uncertain how BLM's actions will affect the unstable mountainside or impede EPA's remedial action planned for 2026.

Congo Gulch Mine, Grant County

Congo Gulch Mine (formerly known as Red Boy Mine) is a historic abandoned gold mine located on private land in the Umatilla National Forrest near Granite, Oregon. This mine is one of many mines located throughout the mountains of the area. The mine shaft opening, or adit, acts as a pathway for highly acidic water contaminated with arsenic and other metals to escape the mine shaft. This contaminated water formerly flowed down Congo Gulch and into Clear Creek, impacting water quality and degrading critical salmonoid habitat. In the early 2000s, a series of settling ponds were constructed to contain contaminated water from Congo Gulch Mine and two other nearby mines. Metal culverts that connect and control water levels between these ponds have failed due to the acidic environment, which increases the risk that contaminated water from the settling pond escapes and spills into Clear Creek. Currently, DEQ is planning procurement and installation of an engineered culvert to reconnect the settling ponds and protect Clear Creek.

Voluntary cleanups

The 1991 Oregon Legislature authorized a Voluntary Cleanup Program to provide DEQ oversight to willing parties for investigating and cleaning up contamination on their properties. This cooperative approach helps parties proceed efficiently and meet funding and redevelopment deadlines. In 1999, DEQ added a second Voluntary Cleanup Program pathway, independent cleanup, which allows parties to complete their own remedial actions with limited or no DEQ oversight. The independent cleanup option is available for relatively simple and moderately contaminated sites that may exceed acceptable risk levels but do not pose significant threats to human health or the environment.

Brownfield redevelopment

A brownfield is a vacant or underused property where actual or perceived contamination impedes site use, expansion, or redevelopment. Nearly every community has brownfields that include vacant lots, former agricultural lands, or abandoned/distressed buildings that were previously used for commercial or industrial purposes. The uncertainty and potential risk to people and wildlife that is associated with the real or perceived presence of contamination at these sites create barriers for site reuse.

Community-led and agency-supported assessment, cleanup (if necessary), and reuse of these properties can provide community-serving spaces including affordable housing and greenspace, increase local property tax bases, provide jobs, address environmental justice issues, help meet Oregon’s land use goals, and enhance public health and the environment. Currently, the DEQ

Brownfields Program does not receive any state funding and relies on three EPA grants to support brownfield redevelopment: 128(a) State Response Regular Appropriation; 128(a) State Response - Investment, Infrastructure, and Jobs Act; and the Columbia River Basin Restoration Funding Assistance Program. These grants support staff positions and provide funding to conduct site investigations and some cleanups across the state.

In fiscal year 2025, DEQ provided technical assistance to 25 local governments and public economic development agencies that received EPA brownfield planning, site assessment, or cleanup grants. DEQ allocated approximately $161,266 in EPA grant funds at six brownfields to conduct site investigations, cleanup planning, limited cleanups, and to recommend next steps in the cleanup process or decide if no further action is needed. EPA 128(a) regular appropriation brownfield grant funding was used across Oregon at the following properties:

- Ione Gas Station (Former), Morrow County
- Gold Hill Cement Power Plant, Jackson County
- Former City Texaco, Lincoln County
- Cornelius (Former Etsby) Gas Station, Washington County
- Corbett Water District, Multnomah County
- STREAM-N Network, Clackamas County

In January 2024, Oregon DEQ's Water Quality Program was awarded over $6 million from the EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Funding Assistance Program. This five-year funding will prevent, reduce, and clean up toxics throughout Oregon's portion of the Columbia River Basin. In addition to fully funding a project manager position (NRS-3), the Cleanup Program is using approximately $1.1 million of this funding to plan for and implement cleanups at up to 10 distressed properties located within the Oregon Columbia River Basin. In collaboration with communities, DEQ will prioritize properties that have the most significant potential benefits to protect water quality in historically underserved communities or those communities that have been disproportionately impacted by toxics. Sites will also be prioritized based on redevelopment readiness and community support.

DEQ will continue to use federal brownfield funding to support community engagement, remove barriers to redevelopment at publicly- and privately-owned properties, and work with project partners to return sites to protective and productive use for community benefits. DEQ will prioritize brownfield work in and with disadvantaged communities, including those that are experiencing disproportionate impacts of extreme weather events.

While DEQ uses EPA funding to support brownfield site investigations and cleanup planning, EPA also offers competitive grant funding to support planning, assessment, and cleanup. DEQ supports grant recipients with technical and regulatory assistance to help them meet the State's

environmental requirements and complete their projects. EPA grant recipients are described below.

EPA Brownfield Grant Federal fiscal year 2025 Awardees:

City of Astoria (cleanup) - $2,000,000: Cleanup of dioxins, furans, metals, volatile organic compounds, and petroleum hydrocarbons at the 1.37-acre Heritage Square site in downtown Astoria.

City of Beaverton (assessment) - $500,000: Proposed activities include completing ten Phase I and eight Phase II investigations, two cleanup plans, two site reuse plans, and one area-wide plan within the Beaverton Downtown District, Allen Boulevard Corridor, and West Five Industrial area.

North Plains Urban Renewal Agency (cleanup) - $1,000,000: Cleanup of organochlorine pesticides and heavy metals at the Glencoe Opportunity Area site located at 10240, 10450, and 10500 NW Glencoe Road and 30745 NW Pacific Street in North Plains.

Northwest Oregon Economic Alliance; partners include Columbia County and Washington County (assessment) - $1,200,000: Proposed activities include completing eight to 10 Phase I and four to five Phase II investigations, four cleanup plans, two site reuse plans, and three area-wide plans focusing on former lumber mills in Columbia County and western Washington County.

City of Portland (assessment and cleanup) - $500,000/each: Cleanup of metals, semi and volatile organic compounds, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and petroleum hydrocarbons at the West Property located at 10505 North Portland Road. Proposed activities include completing ten Phase I and eight Phase II investigations, developing a Community Involvement Plan, and cleanup planning with a focus on East, North, and Northeast Portland.

Tillamook County (assessment) - $500,000: Proposed activities include completing up to 12 Phase I and four Phase II investigations, four cleanup plans, two reuse plans, a hazardous building material survey, and updating the Community Involvement Plan in the target areas of Tillamook, Garibaldi, and Beaver. Additional information on these EPA grantees is available here.

Ongoing EPA assessment and cleanup grants

DEQ continues to provide technical assistance and oversight on previously awarded EPA cleanup, multi-purpose, and assessment grants. These grantees include:

Federal fiscal year 2024 awards:

- City of The Dalles (assessment): $500,000
- City of Eugene, Trainsong Park (cleanup): $1,526,847
- City of Sherwood, Former Frontier Leather Tannery (cleanup): $5,000,000
- Oregon Metro, including Unite Oregon, Washington County, Clackamas County (coalition assessment): $1,500,000
- Port of Arlington (cleanup): $780,000
- North Wasco County School District #21 (cleanup): $500,000

Federal fiscal year 2023 awards:

- Harney County (cleanup): $500,000
    - DEQ is providing Qualified Environmental Professional assistance to administer Harney County's grant
- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (assessment): $1,000,000
- Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (assessment): $1,000,000
- Oregon Department of State Lands (cleanup): $1,000,000
- Oregon State University (cleanup): $2,000,000
- Wild Rivers Land Trust (cleanup_: $1,940,000
- Confederate Tribes of the Siletz Indians (multi-purpose): $800,000

Federal fiscal year 2022 awards:

- ColPac Economic Development District (revolving loan fund): $1,000,000
- Tillamook County (assessment): $500,000
- Clatsop County (assessment): $500,000
- City of Portland (assessment): $500,000
- City of Hillsboro (assessment): $500,000
- Lincoln City (assessment): $500,000
- City of Chiloquin (cleanup): $402,500
- Rogue Valley Council of Governments (assessment): $500,000

Federal fiscal year 2021 awards:

- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (Willamette Falls) (multi-purpose): $800,000
- City of Chiloquin (assessment): $300,000

- Harney County, Cities of Burns and Hines (coalition assessment): $600,000
- Baker Technical Institute Coalition (Baker City, La Grande, Eastern Oregon University) (assessment): $600,000
- South Central Oregon Economic Development District (SCEODD), Lake County and Cities of Lakeview and Paisley (coalition assessment): $600,000
    - DEQ is providing Qualified Environmental Professional assistance to administer Harney County's grant.

Federal fiscal year 2020 awards:

- Baker Technical Institute (cleanup): $500,000
- The Dalles, Wasco County, Port of The Dalles (assessment): $600,000
- Coquille Indian Tribe/Mith-lh-Kwuh Economic Development Corporation (assessment): $350,000
- Oregon Metro Coalition (assessment): $600,000

Heating Oil Tank Program

The Heating Oil Tank Program works with homeowners, real estate agents and service providers on issues related to below-ground tanks storing fuel oil (typically numbers 1 and 2 diesel oil) to heat buildings for human habitation. The HOT Program helps Oregonians meet requirements for the voluntary decommissioning of HOTs, reporting releases, and the cleanup of soil and groundwater contamination. HOT also handles service provider licensing through Your DEQ Online and administers rules for contractors working on HOTs and the cleanup of soil contamination, with consideration for risk-based concentrations in soil, soil vapor, indoor air, and groundwater. The HOT program is unique in the broader Cleanup Program for its often-direct work in residential areas and Oregonian's homes. While the program provides guidance to commercial sites, non-profits, and large residential buildings, the majority of the over 400 heating oil tank projects closed this year were at single family or duplex homes. Two noteworthy HOT projects are described below.

Portland, OR (26-24-0034)

In 2024, a leak from a 635-gallon heating oil tank at a Portland residence was discovered. Soil contaminated by heating oil extended 10 feet below ground surface and had impacted groundwater. Approximately 16.85 tons of contaminated soil was excavated from the yard during the cleanup. DEQ provided guidance for the removal of a temporary vapor extraction system to ensure there was no residual vapor intrusion risk. The results of the investigation showed no unacceptable risk remained and DEQ closed the file for the address.

North Bend, OR (06-05-1281)

As part of the North Bend Family Housing project, DEQ assisted with the closure of the 2005 heating oil tank file at the city's former Bangor Elementary School. After the removal of the 8,000-gallon heating oil tank, an investigation of impacted soil and groundwater was completed. As part of the investigation, 3,000 gallons of oily water and sludge were pumped from the excavation and recycled. The Heating Oil Tank Program coordinated with DEQ's Brownfield Program and with the Oregon Business Development Department, as well as the heating oil tank service provider and the responsible party, to help facilitate this project closure.

Prospective Purchaser Agreements

Prospective Purchaser Agreements facilitate the cleanup and return to productive use of properties contaminated with hazardous substances. The agreements provide developers and others with the means to manage risk and liability before acquiring contaminated property and, following acquisition, to make financial investments and move forward with redevelopment. A PPA is a legally binding agreement between DEQ and a prospective purchaser that limits the purchaser's liability for environmental cleanup at the property in exchange for the purchaser providing a "substantial public benefit," such as cleanup, funding for cleanup, redevelopment of a vacant or underused property, or another important public purpose. For each project, DEQ determines what constitutes a substantial public benefit, believing that flexibility is key to providing the best community outcomes from new site uses.

The PPA program portfolio now includes over 240 PPAs around the state. The program continues to be effective in helping local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private entities acquire properties that provide a variety of public benefits in exchange for protection from liability for legacy contamination. More information on the PPA program can be found on DEQ's Prospective Purchaser Agreement page.

During fiscal year 2025, DEQ entered into four new PPAs, with two in DEQ's Northwest Region and two in its Western Region. These PPAs supported the transfer and productive redevelopment of sites that will provide much needed affordable housing and homeownership, student housing, a minority business incubator, economic development and revitalization of blighted property, and commercial space. These PPAs were purchased by a nonprofit organization, local government, and private businesses.

The City of Cornelius, Cornelius

The City of Cornelius has entered an agreement to clean up a former gas station with a poor compliance history located in its town center. The city permanently decommissioned five

underground storage tanks among other cleanup activities. The city intends to market the site as a part of its efforts to revitalize the city center, envisioning a mixed-use development that provides dining and retail space.

Williams and Russell CDC (Black Business Hub, LLC), Portland

The Black Business Hub, LLC acquired the Williams and Russell Block in the Albina neighborhood of Portland. The property will be developed into three areas: townhomes that will provide a path to affordable home ownership; a four-story office building with a minority business incubator, retail spaces, and plaza; and a six-story affordable apartment building.

This block was originally home to a vibrant African American community. However, through eminent domain, over 170 families and numerous businesses were displaced to expand the neighboring hospital. The block was never developed, and the current owner wishes to return it to the community.

Aspire Eugene, Eugene

Din/Cal 4, Inc. intends to acquire a derelict motel in Eugene for the purposes of developing private student housing for students at the University of Oregon. Prior to being utilized as a motel, the site had a history of heavy industrial uses. In addition to the public benefit of additional student housing near the University of Oregon and downtown Eugene, the prospective purchaser will also contribute to protection of human health and the environment by developing and managing the property in such a way that mitigates the risk of exposure to residual contamination on site in soil, groundwater, and soil vapor.

SELCO Community Credit Union, Springfield

SELCO Community Credit Union purchased the former Umpqua Bank building located at the Mohawk Shopping Center in Springfield. Due to a toxic release from a neighboring dry cleaner, the property has sat vacant and unused for many years. SELCO will take measures to ensure that contaminant vapors do not pose a threat to people inside the credit union branch and return the property to productive use.

Industrial Orphan sites

Industrial Orphan sites are contaminated properties where DEQ has determined the parties responsible for the contamination are unknown, unwilling, or unable to undertake all required removal or remedial action. These sites include individual contaminated properties as well as

area-wide sites where hazardous substances have affected sources of drinking water and other waterbodies.

DEQ generally designates a site an Orphan when contamination at the site poses a serious threat to people or the environment. DEQ may designate contaminated sites with significant but unrealized reuse potential (e.g., brownfields) as Orphans if federal funding is unavailable or is inadequate to characterize and clean up the contamination to a level that is protective of human health and the environment. DEQ may also refer large and complex Orphan sites to EPA for listing on the National Priorities List and use the Industrial Orphan Site Account to pay the state's required 10 percent share of remedial action costs and ongoing oversight and maintenance. Since 1992, DEQ has declared 168 sites Industrial Orphans. 51 of these sites have been cleaned up to No Further Action status, with many now supporting enhanced uses through redevelopment. The remaining Orphans are in various stages of investigation and cleanup, including long-term monitoring and/or operation and maintenance (such as ongoing treatment systems to protect drinking water resources). During fiscal year 2025, DEQ worked actively on 14 Industrial Orphan sites.

3. Environmental Cleanup Program modernization

As Oregon's population grows and its industries evolve, DEQ's Environmental Cleanup program faces new opportunities and new challenges. Statewide, former industrial sites are being redeveloped for new purposes, and DEQ often now works on smaller sites that require quick turnaround to facilitate real estate transactions. Meanwhile, DEQ is called to engage residents in neighboring communities while it performs essential oversight of cleanup activities.

Over the past two decades, revenue sources have remained static while costs have increased. DEQ has adjusted programs and responsibilities to meet changing needs and expectations. The Environmental Cleanup Program is operating with fewer filled positions, despite greater pressures on staff and management. To address this situation, DEQ is modernizing its program by stabilizing funding and strategically planning our work ahead.

Cleanup 2050 Strategic Planning Project

The Environmental Cleanup Program is engaging in a strategic planning project as part of its modernization efforts. This project aims to reevaluate the program's tools, methodologies, and processes, evaluate sustainable funding mechanisms for current and future work, understand partner and community expectations, and better develop our relationships with those groups in order to better protect human health and the environment in Oregon.

As part of this process, the Cleanup Program is working with teams from Portland State University (Oregon's Kitchen Table and the Institute for Tribal Government) to engage in robust, equity- and environmental justice-forward conversations with the state's citizens, Tribal Nations, and regulated community about what the program should look like in the future, as well as holding internal listening sessions to identify common programmatic concerns. At its close, the project will produce a vision document outlining long-term goals for the program to be accomplished by 2050, as well as an action plan to guide and empower staff to turn that vision into reality.

In fiscal year 2025, Cleanup's strategic planning team:

- Collaborated with PSU's Institute of Tribal Government to stage a two-day, program-wide training on tribal engagement in the state
- Presented on opportunities for collaboration between tribes and the program at 2024's Oregon Tribal Environmental Forum

- Established staff-led subgroups to inform external outreach, solicit and review internal feedback, and assist in eventual implementation of the strategic plan
- Began work to identify Oregon communities disproportionately impacted by Cleanup's work, to be contacted during the project's external outreach phase

In the next year, the strategic planning team plans to:

- Conduct individual listening sessions with each of Oregon's Nine Federally Recognized Tribes
- Conduct multiple, staff-wide internal listening sessions
- Finalize work identifying disproportionately impacted communities and conduct listening sessions with several across DEQ's regions
- Engage with the regulated community to solicit feedback on Cleanup's work
- Receive additional assistance from a team on PSU's Affiliated Practitioner List to help with analysis of feedback and creation of the project's final deliverables

This project is funded primarily by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act grant, providing supporting positions, contracting dollars, and staff time for the strategic planning effort. This grant will cover much of the project work through 2027.

Institutional and Engineering Control inspection

The Environmental Cleanup Program's Institutional and Engineering Control Program is actively updating existing guidance to standardize how controls are implemented and maintained to ensure the continued protection of public health and the environment. Controls can be easements that place conditions on properties and land use or Engineering Controls such as treatment systems or caps placed above repositories of contaminated soil.

4. Cleanup milestones and projections

The following table summarizes actions initiated and completed by DEQ's Environmental Cleanup program during fiscal year 2025. A forecast for fiscal year 2026 is also included.

Table 1: Actions completed by DEQ's Environmental Cleanup Program during fiscal year 2025 and forecast for fiscal year 2026.

Site Actions	Fiscal Year 2025 (Actual)		Fiscal Year 2026 (Forecast)	
	Initiated	Completed	Initiated	Completed
Suspected release sites added to YDO database		46		45
Site screenings	10	5	5	5
Preliminary assessments	0	1	1	1
Removal actions (formal)	6	6	5	5
Remedial investigations	1	2	2	2
Feasibility studies	1	0	1	1
Records of decision	0	0	2	2
Remedial actions	2	2	2	2
No Further Action decisions (including informal removal actions)		31		30

Note 1: Fiscal year 2026 forecasts are based on best professional judgement of the Environmental Cleanup Program Management Team. One-time actions show data in the "completed" columns only.

Note 2: The Environmental Cleanup program has fully transitioned to the use of Your DEQ Online as the public-facing database holding the environmental cleanup site information (formerly housed in a separate database named ECSI). This database serves the function of both site inventory and confirmed release list. The numbers for fiscal year 2025 are lower than those forecasted in fiscal year 2024, and it is likely these numbers are an undercount of the actual activity for fiscal year 2025. Ongoing retraining for program staff and as well as data quality audits are part of the effort to ensure completeness of and access to this information.