

Coordination & Engagement on Issues Related to the JH Baxter Facility

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CORE TEAM

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Meeting #26

Meeting Summary

Participants for All or Part of the Meeting: Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault (BT), Lisa Arkin (Community Member), Robin Bloomgarden (BT/ABC), Nicole Caveny (EPA), Anne Christopher (EPA), Alice Corcoran (EPA), Dylan Darling (DEQ), Diane DeAutremont (Community Member/JHB Neighbor), Sarah Eagle (DEQ), Brad Eagleson (DEQ), David Farrer (OHA), Keri Handaly (CTGR), Travis Knudsen (LRAPA), Kaley Major (DEQ), Randy Nattis (EPA), Teresa Roark (Lane County), Matt Sorensen (LRAPA), Jon Wilson (CoE), and Lin Woodrich (ABC);
Facilitation Team: Donna Silverberg and Emily Stranz (DSC)

Welcome and Introductions - Donna welcomed the group and reviewed the purpose of the Core Team:

The purpose of this effort is to bring a core group of community, agency, and local government representatives together to discuss information on environmental pollution regarding the JH Baxter facility in the Bethel Neighborhood of West Eugene. The Core Team will share environmental and public health information and discuss the impact of the data on the community. The objective is to develop a cohesive plan for trust-building community engagement, while working together to improve the quality of life by reducing pollution in the air, water and soil in West Eugene now and into the future. If appropriate, this group will help draft recommendations that protect public health and improve environmental quality to agency decision makers.

Tonight's session is focused on reconnecting and hearing updates from EPA about the clean-up process, as well as to provide an opportunity for questions and hear updates from other Core Team partners.

EPA Updates – Annie, Nicole, and Alice provided updates on behalf of US EPA.

Time Critical Removal Action (Removal Program) – The Removal Program is tasked with emergency response and short-term clean-up of waste that is important to remove quickly. This work included removal of hazardous waste and the tanks onsite. Currently, EPA's Removal Program is working to remove the last portion of stored waste that was generated during the removal actions and shipping it for proper disposal. This is the final step for the Removal Program. The pace of work depends on the disposal facility's capacity to accept and manage the waste.

Superfund Efforts to Date (Remedial Program) – The Remedial Program is the longer-term clean-up effort headed by EPA. This effort will investigate any further contamination in the soil, under the site, and in the water (if any). For purposes of the Remedial effort, the "site" is not just the JH Baxter property but is defined by where the contaminants have ended up. If contaminants have moved off the JH Baxter property, those areas will be included in EPA's Superfund Site. To determine the boundaries of the site, EPA will test surrounding areas and waterways for contaminants linked to JH Baxter.

Additionally, EPA wants to determine the extent of the contamination on the JH Baxter site. During the Removal actions, contamination was found underneath the tanks. Contractors will be onsite in January to sample the soil to help further delineate the contamination under the tanks in the processing area. The data will support the sitewide remedial investigation and will inform EPA regarding whether there needs to be any more removal actions at JH Baxter.

Coordination & Engagement on Issues Related to the JH Baxter Facility

EPA provided an update to EPA Headquarters this week and, depending on results from this next round of sampling, EPA may or may not be get additional funding for another Removal Program action. Meanwhile, the Remedial Program work is moving forward. EPA staff continue to strategize to move things forward as quickly as possible.

- EPA is coordinating with DEQ, as appropriate, to support JHB's upkeep and operation of the stormwater and groundwater treatment systems. Q: Will EPA be sampling offsite?
 - R: Yes, in late spring or early summer. The near-term sampling will be at JH Baxter.
- Q: Are the groundwater and stormwater systems currently working?
 - R: There have been some issues over the years, however, at the time of the meeting the groundwater system was working at partial capacity, and the stormwater system is not running as they had run out of chemicals required for treatment. DEQ has no reason to believe that the groundwater system is not meeting permit limits, but Georgia has not done the required analysis or turned in her discharge monitoring reports for several months. The groundwater system consists of three pumps, most of which have been working over the years, however, one or two have been down from time to time. The systems are working but could run better. For instance, the operator onsite has to run the system manually due to copper wires that were stripped by vandals and never replaced. DEQ has been watching the systems closely and is in regular contact with Georgia Baxter and the onsite operator.
- Q: What happened with the onsite security?
 - R: EPA has been paying for full time security while they were onsite doing the Removal Actions. EPA has let Georgia Baxter know that she needs to provide security for the site while EPA/contractors are not onsite. It is important to keep the ground and stormwater systems up and running (it is a requirement of the JHB NPDES permit through the State) so the systems need to be protected from vandalism. It would be a violation of the permit for any water to leave the site without treatment. There is not a lot onsite to vandalize at this point and EPA will work with Georgia to ensure that there is site security.
- Q: Do the Remedial investigations include examining historical information about intentional movement of waste from the site of origin to new location(s) such as contaminated soil moved from Baxter to parks (i.e. Alton Baker Park)?
 - R: The Remedial investigation looks at contamination that has migrated off the property. That doesn't typically mean looking into historical records of how waste was intentionally moved offsite.
- Q: Does the City or County keep tabs on records of disposal? Are there County records on Alton Baker when it was a dump?
 - R: Not sure. Jon and/or Teresa agreed to check internally at the City and County.

Community Involvement Plan (CIP) – EPA is working on two CIPs – one for the Removal actions, and another for the Remedial. The regulations of Superfund Code require EPA to start a CIP, which is why they are drafting the Remedial CIP before finalizing the Removal CIP (which was initiated in 2025). While the timeline for both CIPs is unknown at this point, Alice will share information with the Core Team as it is available. She noted she will likely reach out to Core Team members soon for interviews for the Remedial CIP.

Alice will also conduct interviews with other community members. The group discussed whether to extend an invitation to other community members to join the Core Team? The Core Team felt that the community

Coordination & Engagement on Issues Related to the JH Baxter Facility

members who have had their yards cleaned-up, or are going to, should be invited. However, DEQ and EPA will need to bring them up to speed on the project first.

Core Team members also suggested:

- The LongTom Watershed Council, as sampling will be occurring in the watershed.
- Possibly adding folks from the River Road area. Jon noted that he lives in that area and can ask around to gauge interest when the time is right.
- The Trainsong Neighborhood Association is another group to consider, as they are dealing with dioxin contamination in Trainsong Park. Lin is happy to connect folks with the Trainsong Neighborhood Association if the Core Team would like to connect with them.
 - It was noted that, from DEQ's perspective, the JHB and Trainsong contamination is not related. It is just that the Trainsong contamination was discovered during background sampling for JHB. The City of Eugene is in charge of sampling at Trainsong.
 - Robin noted that the contamination is the same as in the Bethel neighborhood around JHB, and that Trainsong could have been used as a dump for JHB, similar to Alton Baker.
- Also, the City of Eugene is looking to hire a Risks Hazard contractor for land use zone guidance; once onboard, they might be helpful to bring in to the Core Team too.

The group generally agreed to wait to expand the Core Team until after the Remedial sampling is complete and there is a better sense of the site and where the priorities are. For now, it is important for EPA and others to stay focused and narrow on the issues at JH Baxter.

Reuse of Site – EPA is limited on what they can do regarding reuse of the site because EPA doesn't own the property. The reuse decisions are up to Georgia, the property owner. EPA is a coordinator and, as such, can provide information to any potential purchaser. A potential new owner needs to know what they would be getting into, including the Superfund site, needs, and regulations. EPA will stay in the loop and aware of potential reuses, but can't dictate what the property becomes. There are different uses allowed for different sites. This site is zoned industrial; a change in that zoning would need to come from the City. If there were a plan from the City, EPA could support the plan by providing information on what is allowed and what is not.

The EPA Prospective Purchaser Agreement (PPA) process includes a 30-day public comment period. EPA does not require a public benefit analysis as DEQ does for the PPA process. While there is nothing in conflict between the Oregon and Federal PPA processes, there are different requirements.

- Q: For end use, if they wanted to make it residential, would EPA funds be used to clean the site to that level?
 - R: It is not common to shift to residential standards as those standards are quite strict. It is more common to shift from industrial to recreational. Recreational standards are more strict than industrial standards, but not as strict as residential.
- Q: Georgia owes a lot of money. If she sells the property does she get to keep the profits?
 - R: DEQ has liens on JHB properties due to the fines and remedial action costs, which will need to be paid as required by law. LRAPA noted that Georgia has paid off the fines JHB owed LRAPA. EPA also placed a lien on the property.

Local Public Health Standards – Lin provided a [presentation](#) recently given to the City of Eugene Planning Commission, as a result of Eugene City Council's recommendation for more coordination between City planning and local and State environmental agencies. The City Council noted that when there is not cross-agency

Coordination & Engagement on Issues Related to the JH Baxter Facility

communication, things more easily slip through the cracks. They are interested in adopting code amendments that improve coordination and communication around environmental permits.

There are two different recommendations that were presented:

- Version 3, which the Planning Department is recommending to the City, requires documentation by the applicant identifying all air, land, and water permits needed and attestation that the listed permits are those required for any proposed development. The businesses requesting permits would be responsible for contacting the agencies. The City would provide notice to EPA, ODEQ, and LRAPA, with information on the property.
- Version 4 has fewer requirements; it requires the City to prepare a list of the organizations requesting permits and the City will provide basic information to the agencies.

From the group's understanding, the level of coordination required by both Version 3 and 4 is not the same as the JHB cross-agency coordination, which everyone noted has been vital for the overall effort. Instead, the permit applicant would do a self-review to get a sense of the environmental regulatory needs and permit requirements. They would notify the City and send the permit list to the agencies for their review and concurrence (or not). The heads up of the new operation is helpful to the agencies, so they are aware of permitting needs coming their way. If there were a requirement and resources for a call/meeting for all the agencies, that would be helpful, but not part of the current versions.

Lin asked the agencies for input on how the proposed code amendments would impact the agencies?

- LRAPA commented to the City in support of enhanced coordination as noted in Version 3. Coordination is helpful and important and it is not a significant burden on LRAPA. Version 4 is still helpful, but less so than Version 3.
- EPA noted that it would not impact them; they do not issue permits through the CERCLA program or obtain permits for CERCLA work.
- OHA doesn't do any permitting except for public drinking water systems and healthcare facilities.
- DEQ Cleanup also does not issue permits.
 - DEQ has been trying to improve the availability of public notices and draft permits via DEQonline.
- DEQ Water Quality requires NPDES (non-point discharge elimination system) permits, as appropriate; the extent of the requirements depends on how the site is developed.
 - When DEQ permits go out for public comment, commenters can ask for stricter permits.

Community members stressed that this is an opportunity to start the conversation and coordination earlier in the process: before permits are granted and the development is set in stone. The cross coordination that has occurred through the JHB process has been invaluable, as there is not usually opportunity for the community and agencies to be so engaged. This is a step towards a shift towards more on-the-ground coordination and communication.

There is a public hearing on February 17th, during which the versions will be presented to City Council.

Updates:

- LRAPA's is planning to update their Public Notices to connect to more resources about air pollutants such as the CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and other resources.
- DEQ Cleanup finalized and posted the Residential Cleanup Completion Report recently. Available here: [Content Manager WebDrawer - Search Results](#). There has been lots of great coordination

Coordination & Engagement on Issues Related to the JH Baxter Facility

with EPA lately-- DEQ participated in their site visit on Tuesday and gave DEQ project background. Additionally, DEQ is working to make all their historical work, data, and reports for the JH Baxter site available to EPA's RI/FS contractor.

- Lane County Public Health has no updates, but Teresa will look into what kind of records the County has related to the dump previously at Alton Baker Park.
 - UPDATE: After the meeting, Teresa provided the following response from the Lane County Public Health Waste Management Division: *The Day Island site has been investigated by both the DEQ and EPA, and if either agency decides to reopen an investigation we'll gladly work with them. As both agencies have records of the investigations that have been conducted on the site there aren't additional materials to send them.*
- The City of Eugene is continuing to do weekly spot checks on J.H. Baxter's northern water outfall and helping identify appropriate contacts within the CoE organization to assist partner agencies in their efforts. Jon also will inquire internally regarding additional information on the dump at Alton Baker Park.
 - UPDATE: After the meeting, Jon provided the following response from the City of Eugene: *Lane County was responsible for the landfill while it was in operation, and the City of Eugene does not have any additional information related to the materials disposed that hasn't already been released by the County or other regulatory authorities.*
- DEQ Water Quality reported that, during the 3 months that Georgia was in prison, there were issues with water sampling and reporting. Georgia is reengaging with the lab that had been doing the sampling (but stopped due to lack of payment); DEQ expects to start getting sampling reports soon. During the last 3 months JHB wasn't sampling and, but based off historical records, DEQ does not have reason to believe that discharge is outside of permitted limits. However, they expect that JHB sampling and reports will be back up and running and in compliance with her permit in the near future. UPDATE: *As of 1/21 the stormwater system has been supplied with the necessary chemicals by Georgia and is back up and running.*
- Beyond Toxics did not have any updates.

With that, Donna thanked the group for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

This summary is respectfully drafted by the DS Consulting Facilitation Team. Suggested edits are welcome and can be emailed to Emily Stranz (emily@dsconsult.co).