Best Achievable Protection

The Issue

In 2012, the Legislature set a new cornerstone benchmark in RCW 88.46 for commercial vessels to achieve the greatest degree of protection in their preparation for oil spills.

Best achievable protection (BAP) is the highest standard that can be reached through use of best response technology, robust staffing levels, sound training procedures, and approved operational methods.

BAP is determined by considering technical achievability, the additional protection of the response measures and the cost. Currently this 'gold standard' applies only to commercial vessels and should be extended to oil handling facilities.

Solution

Require that refineries, pipelines, terminals, etc., all work toward the BAP standard.

Proposed Legislation

Ecology is proposing legislation to add the concept of BAP to RCW 90.56, applying cycles for improvement to facilities, including refineries, pipelines, terminals, and rail operators. Currently the facility standard is 'to the maximum extent practicable.' Adding BAP to RCW 90.56 means a consistent future of continuous improvement in readiness.

There is no financial cost to this proposal.

How it benefits Washington

Ecology calculated that a major marine oil spill could cost Washington's economy $10.8 billion and adversely affect up to 165,000 jobs. This is due to disruptions to maritime shipping and public port activities, recreation and tourism, and injuries to state fish, shellfish, and wildlife resources.

Preparedness activities like the BAP cycle support our goal of rapid, aggressive and well coordinated response. Preparedness measures minimize impacts to sensitive environmental, cultural, and economic resources.

WHY IT MATTERS

Washington State developed a cycle for continuous improvement for oil spill readiness by setting a new standard of BAP.

BAP uses a collaborative approach to address response issues, remove technical or regulatory barriers to the implementation of new technologies, and measure our results. BAP provides transparency for the public.

You can follow the current status of the BAP cycle at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/preparedness/BAP.html

Oil transportation information: ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/OilMovement/index.htm.

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Ecology's Spills Website

ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/spills.html

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