



FORMAL NOTICE

Date posted: December 1, 2025

Comments Requested and Virtual Public Meetings on a Proposed Prospective Purchaser Agreement for the McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co. Property in Portland

HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENT

Facility/property: McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co.

Project location: 6900 N Edgewater Ave., Portland

Public meeting details: See details below

Submit written comments:

By mail: Sarah Miller, Oregon DEQ, 700 NE Multnomah St., Suite 600, Portland, OR 97232

By email: sarah.miller@deq.oregon.gov

Comments due by: Jan. 30, 2026 at 5 p.m.

Información en español a continuación

Proposal highlights

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality proposes to enter into a Prospective Purchaser Agreement with Portland Botanical Gardens, an Oregon nonprofit public benefit corporation, to facilitate the purchase and redevelopment of the former McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co. property located at 6900 N Edgewater Ave. in Portland. DEQ invites the public to attend an upcoming virtual public meeting and provide verbal or written comments on the conditions of this proposed agreement.

Portland Botanical Gardens plans to develop research and education focused botanical gardens on a portion of the property, a public greenspace along the waterfront which will include a new segment of the Willamette River greenway, interpretive native plant gardens, and an open gathering space.

The proposed Prospective Purchaser Agreement includes conditions with which Portland Botanical Gardens must comply, including but not limited to:

- Monitoring requirements and restrictions to ensure the cleanup infrastructure is not damaged and will remain protective of human health and the environment as designed
- Public access to greenspace and the Willamette River
- Habitat improvements and conservation of riparian forest
- Community and Tribal engagement plans
- Security of the property to ensure public safety

While obtaining a Prospective Purchaser Agreement is a required step in this property transaction process, an approval is not the final step and does not mean the property transfer will immediately occur. The proposed Prospective Purchaser Agreement includes requirements and timelines that Portland Botanical Gardens will need to satisfy before DEQ will approve a property transaction, including the ability to demonstrate financial ability to implement their proposed development plans.

Translation or other formats

[Español](#) | [한국어](#) | [繁體中文](#) | [Русский](#) | [Tiếng Việt](#) | [العربية](#)
800-452-4011 | TTY: 711 | deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov

Background

The McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co. Superfund Site is in North Portland between the University of Portland's Franz River Campus and Metro's future Willamette Cove nature park. The site includes 41 acres of land along the Willamette River and approximately 19 acres of in-water habitat.

The McCormick & Baxter Creosoting Co. operated a wood treating facility at the site between 1944 and 1991, when the company declared bankruptcy and ceased operations. The site was heavily contaminated with creosote, metals, and other contaminants over decades of industrial use.

DEQ declared the property as an "Orphan site" in 1992 due to the significant human health and environmental risk posed at the site and lack of a viable responsible party. [Orphan sites](#) are properties contaminated by a release of hazardous substances that pose serious threats to human health or the environment and where the parties responsible for the contamination are unknown, unable, or unwilling to pay for needed cleanup actions.

EPA [listed the site](#) on the National Priorities List, also known as Superfund, in June 1994 based on information collected by DEQ. EPA designated DEQ as the lead agency for implementing the cleanup while funding for remedial design and construction was provided by EPA. DEQ and EPA worked together throughout the 1990s and early 2000s to conduct studies and design and implement the cleanup project.

The cleanup was completed in 2005 and included excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated upland soil, construction of a clean soil cap over the entire site, extraction and treatment of contaminated groundwater, construction of an underground groundwater barrier wall to prevent migration of pollution from the site to the river, and capping contaminated sediment in the Willamette River. Long-term protections and environmental monitoring by DEQ and EPA are ongoing.

DEQ's Prospective Purchaser Agreement program was created in 1995 through amendments to the state's Environmental Cleanup Law. The agreement is a tool that expedites the cleanup of contaminated property and encourages property transactions that would otherwise not likely occur because of the liabilities associated with purchasing a contaminated site.

The proposed agreement provides a release from liability for claims by the State of Oregon under ORS 465.200 to 465.545 and 465.900, 466.640 and 468B.310 regarding existing hazardous substance releases at or from the property. The proposed agreement will also provide Portland Botanical Gardens with third-party liability protection.

Virtual public meetings:

DEQ will host virtual public meetings about the proposed Prospective Purchaser Agreement. This is an opportunity for the public to learn more about the project and ask questions to DEQ and Portland Botanical Gardens to help inform any comments they'd like to provide verbally or in writing. Portland

Botanical Gardens will also present its conceptual plan for the site; however, DEQ can only consider comments on the proposed Prospective Purchaser Agreement.

Session 1: Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

- [Register to join on Zoom](#)
- Or join via phone by calling 253-215-8782 and entering Webinar ID: 856 5522 2770, Passcode: 939913.

Session 2: Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

- [Register to join on Zoom](#)
- Or join via phone by calling 253-215-8782 and entering Webinar ID: 893 3073 3227, Passcode: 128576.

Session 3: Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

- [Register to join on Zoom](#)
- Or join via phone by calling 253-215-8782 and entering Webinar ID: 882 9136 4220, Passcode: 866692.

For more information

Learn more by visiting DEQ's informational [project web page](#), Your DEQ Online database [web page](#), and [online project documents](#).

Spanish language interpretation is available. Please email Sarah Miller at sarah.miller@deq.oregon.gov to request language interpretation in other languages.

If you do not have web access and want to review the project file, contact Sarah Miller at 503-863-0561 or sarah.miller@deq.oregon.gov to view the documents in person at a DEQ office.

The next step

DEQ will consider all comments received by the date and time stated above before making a final decision regarding the proposed Prospective Purchaser Agreement.

Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in the administration of its programs and activities. Visit DEQ's [Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page](#).