

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WALPA Encourages Residents to “Get the P Out!”

SPOKANE COUNTY, WA (February 18, 2009) - Washington Lake Protection Association (WALPA) encourages residents of Spokane County to continue their efforts with phosphorus (P) free dish detergent. The sale of dish detergent containing 0.5% phosphorus or more in Spokane County was banned by legislation in July of 2008. This ban is scheduled to go statewide in July of 2010.

WALPA is asking that Spokane County residents keep trying different brands until they find one that works and more importantly to share that information with friends and neighbors.

Not all P-free dishwasher detergents are the same. The water hardness at your home can greatly impact how well different detergents perform. The softer your water, the more likely more P-free formulations will work. After much testing among WALPA members, friends and families, it was discovered that effective P-free dish detergents are available for locations throughout Spokane County.

WALPA President-elect Jacob McCann, a Spokane resident, acknowledges that while change can be inconvenient, there are local solutions to the dish dilemma. “We want Spokane County residents to know that there are products available in our local supermarkets that will work in your dishwasher. As with everything else, it’s a matter of finding the one that works best for you. Clean lakes and clean dishes do not have to be mutually exclusive. ”

The removal of P from dish detergent is an "easy" step towards cleaning up our region's waters. P is very costly and difficult to remove from wastewater and therefore ends up being discharged to our rivers and lakes from local treatment plants. Excessive algae blooms, which are caused by increased nutrients, including P, have become more frequent and increasingly more toxic. In water, P behaves as a fertilizer, accelerating plant and algae growth. When plants and algae die, bacteria consume oxygen that is dissolved in the water. When this happens, less oxygen is available for fish and aquatic life that need oxygen to survive.

The future of our rivers and lakes depends on controlling, reducing, and removing the P going into our waters. P-free dish detergent is a small and simple way each household can contribute to this effort.

Data from regional wastewater treatment plants suggests P-free dishwasher detergent may be making a difference. Preliminary post-ban monitoring shows a decline of P inflow to wastewater facilities of approximately 20%.

Please go to WALPA’s website (www.walpa.org) for more information, including a survey of P-free dishwasher detergents sold at major grocery stores in Spokane County.

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