

# \$10 billion price put on Sound cleanup

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Officials say restoring Puget Sound might cost \$10 billion and require a public-relations effort to persuade Congress and the public to spend the money.

That was the message from local, state and federal officials who met this week in Seattle to discuss the reportedly poor ecological health of the Sound, the Seattle Times reported Thursday.

"It's relatively easy to generate a lot of enthusiasm for Puget Sound in the short term," said William Ruckelshaus of Seattle, former director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Sustaining the effort to clean it up is somewhat tougher."

Recent studies indicate toxic chemicals are still in fish and marine mammals, bird species are disappearing, habitat is being eroded by development, and pollution is still flushing into the Sound, the Times reported.

Participants in Wednesday's meeting agreed to recommend Gov. Christine Gregoire work toward convincing Congress to spend up to \$5 billion for the project, Kathy Fletcher, executive director of People for Puget Sound, told the newspaper.

The group also plans to recommend specific actions, including creating user fees and salmon taxes, to help pay for the other half of the work, the newspaper reported.

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