

# Keizertimes

SECTION A

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## Polluted dirt could move through Keizer

### City wants more info before plan progresses

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

The City of Keizer is asking for more information before the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) permits a contractor to truck 152,000 cubic yards of polluted soil through Keizer.

“The city is not opposing the project, we just want questions answered and to make sure that our citizens are protected and our neighbors are protected,” said Elizabeth Sagmiller, manager of Keizer’s environmental and technical division.

The main concern is the presence of a pesticide called dieldrin (see sidebar: What is dieldrin?). The soil contains several long-lasting pollutants, but dieldrin is the only one that exceeds health standards for residential use. The current plan is to haul the soil – in approximately 14,000 truckloads – from a development site off Hazelgreen Road Northeast in Salem, west on Lockhaven Drive and then north on Windsor Island road to fill in two abandoned quarries. The route travels near hundreds of Keizer residences, directly past three schools (Chemawa Indian School, Whiteaker Middle School and McNary High School), and a block away from Keizer Elementary School.

Granada Land Company, LLC, has already begun work on a planned 500-home residential development at the Hazelgreen site, known as Northstar. Windsor Island Company, LLC, which is owned by the Zielski Family Trust owns the planned disposal site at 6848 Windsor Island Road North, which is outside Keizer city limits. Visitors to the development site can see where several inches of soil have already been removed in the southeast corner of the 150-acre development. For now, the tainted soil is being stored on the site.

Despite public notices in

traditional outlets, Keizer officials were unaware of the plan to move the dirt through the city until an article appeared in the Statesman Journal in July, with a deadline for public comment looming, Sagmiller said.

Nancy Sawka, a DEQ senior project manager, said that DEQ mailed out more than 200 public comment notices and the exclusion of Keizer

was unintentional.

“I would have expected that the developer or project engineer contact us regarding how their plan was going to work. They aren’t under any obligation to do that because they aren’t getting a permit from Keizer, but it would have been nice to get the heads up,” Sagmiller said.

DEQ officials and Keizer representatives met on July 31 to discuss the matter, but Sagmiller said she was hesitant to put any faith in the commitments made until she saw it in writing. DEQ officials also admitted they hadn’t visited the disposal site during the meeting, but have done so since.

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### DEQ decision hinged on how the soil would be used, not where

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) looked at several options for handling contaminated soil at the site of a residential development in Salem before determining that moving it to two abandoned quarries north of Keizer would be the best fit.

The decision boiled down to how the soil could be accessed by the public, said Nancy Sawka, a senior project manager with DEQ. The owners of the Northstar development, Granada Land Company, LLC, proposed several options for

dealing with the pesticide-contaminated dirt: moving to a low-lying area of the property and capping it, which would require ongoing monitoring; treating the soil onsite to reduce contamination; excavating it and moving it to a landfill; or moving it to the quarry pits for future continued agricultural use.

It will take approximately **14,000 trips** to move the **152,000 cubic yards of soil**

Moving it to the quarries was the cheapest option on the board, but it had other benefits, Sawka said.

“Even if the contaminated soil was capped (onsite), there would always be a chance that residents or children could come in contact with the soil by

#### What is *dieldrin*?

Dieldrin is the primary concern in tainted dirt the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality could allow to move through Keizer for dumping in abandoned quarries northeast of city limits.

Dieldrin is an insecticide developed as an alternative to DDT in the 1940s. It was used primarily on fruit, soil and seed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture banned the use of dieldrin in 1970, but it is a legacy pollutant that remains in the environment long after being introduced.

Other pesticides – DDT, DDD, DDE, aldrin, atrazine, chlorophyrifos and diuron – are present in the soil, but dieldrin is the only one that exceeds health standards. When as little as a pound of dieldrin enters the environment, the federal government’s National Response Center (NRC) must be notified immediately. The NRC is operated by the U.S. Coast Guard and responds to environmental contaminations.

After initial tests of 350 samples revealed the presence of dieldrin and the

other pollutants, an additional 10 were ordered specifically for dieldrin testing. The suggested limit on dieldrin is .02 parts-per-million (PPM). Tests of 10 soil samples from the development site in last month revealed three without dieldrin contamination, six samples between .02 and .08 PPM, and one sample where the contamination was nearly 10 times the permissible level.

The report on the contamination, supplied by Multi/Tech Engineering Services, Inc., suggests that further testing is necessary to determine the breadth and depth of the affected soil.

In addition to the soil passing through Keizer to the disposal site, Elizabeth Sagmiller, manager of Keizer’s environmental and technical division, said continuing to use the soil for farming could also be a problem. Because dieldrin breaks down slowly, it is subject to biomagnification, the process by which toxic substances accumulate in larger amounts the higher up the food chain it goes.

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