



Portland Clean Air

How We Got DEQ Air Permits

First, it took six months of occasional phone calls to DEQ to answer the question: "How do I find out which industries you regulate and what chemicals these industries emit into the air?" DEQ workers kept referring me the DEQ Facility Profiler. This online database has little benefit to the public and cannot be used to answer the question above.

Once we realized we wanted Air Contaminant Discharge Permit (ACDP) information, this led to another six months of phone calls and an in-person meeting with DEQ officials. At that meeting Portland Clean Air announced the intention to sue the DEQ to obtain access to ACDP records. The DEQ then dropped the thousands of dollars of requested access fees, and wheeled about 8,000 pages of paper records into their reading room of which we scanned over 5,000 pages and put online for the first time. At that time DEQ emailed us a spreadsheet of ACDPs for Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties. These spreadsheets were used for this report. Portland Clean Air and EPAC volunteers spent a total of 40 hours in the reading room scanning all Air Contaminant Discharge Permits (ACDP). Now citizens can go to our geographical search at portlandcleanair.org and download PDFs of these documents for free.

The steps that the DEQ requires the public to complete to get a copy of an ACDP:

1. Research the DEQ public records request process.
2. Research the industry(s) near the citizen's home or workplace (Other than using portlandcleanair.org this is almost impossible - see below **)
3. Fill out an online public records request form that appears not to work (for our information requests I had to email in a screen shot as the "send" button did not work.)
4. Wait for response
5. Pay a fee or fill out a fee waiver request form
6. Wait for delivery

7. Repeat steps 3 - 6 for each industry near the citizen's home of workplace.

Now a citizen can go to portlandcleanair.org and look at a map and download ACDPs without wasting DEQ resources, fees, or their own time wasted. Step two above took me six months working 1-2 hours per week, after eight phone calls to DEQ staff asking how to find out who were the industrial air polluters by my house. My GPA was 3.84 in Political Science from HSU. I also had the help of Seth Woolley who is a senior programmer and spatial database expert.

** Using the DEQ Facility Profiler at <http://deq12.deq.state.or.us/fp20/> to research the industries near a person's house requires:

1. Find the DEQ Facility Profile by calling DEQ and talking to staff.
2. Make a geographic request.
3. Export the giant list that results.
4. Research the numerous categories in the resulting list.
5. Isolate TRAACS data.
6. Plot the TRACCS data using Google maps.
7. Make a list of industries by your home or workplace possibly causing a smell or nuisance.
8. Research the ACDP permit type for each industry.

- Greg Bourget
Executive Director
Portland Clean Air