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## Department of Ecology News Release - January 28, 2008

08-025

### Ecology fines Darigold Lynden plant \$60,000

BELLEVUE – The Department of Ecology (Ecology) has fined Darigold, Inc. \$60,000 for water quality permit violations at the company's Lynden dairy processing plant.

The violations of temperature and total suspended solids standards and reporting requirements occurred from March through June of 2007. Ecology has previously fined the plant for similar violations: \$95,000 in May, 2007 and \$60,000 in December, 2005, both times for a series of several violations.

"It is unusual to see violations continue at such a level and so soon after another major penalty," said Dave Peeler, who manages Ecology's water quality program. "Three penalties in just over two years, in spite of technical assistance efforts by Ecology, should make our intent clear: Darigold must comply with the requirements in its permit."

"The operators have an important obligation to protect the Nooksack River," Peeler added.

The Darigold facility discharges to the Lynden wastewater treatment plant. Excessive pollutant levels from Darigold can interfere with the city's treatment system, which discharges to the Nooksack River. Darigold is required to operate pre-treatment systems and to abide by limits in its Ecology permit for pollutants associated with dairy production.

An excess of suspended solids can overload the City's treatment plant and send partially untreated sewage into the river. Discharges above 80 degrees Fahrenheit pose a risk to the river's fish and freshwater organisms that need cool water to survive.

The Nooksack River provides habitat for several fish species, including 10 native salmonids. Chum and chinook salmon use the river for spawning. These and other species also use the Nooksack as a corridor to prime spawning habitats upstream.

City wastewater treatment plant operators have been forced to take special measures in response to inflows with excessive pollutant levels from the Darigold plant. These actions have prevented Lynden from also violating the city facility's water-quality permit.

Darigold may appeal the penalty to Ecology or to the Washington State Pollution Control Hearings Board within 30 days.

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News releases on earlier penalties:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2007news/2007-119.html>

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2005news/2005-301.html>

