

RV Camping Study Finds Alarming Water Quality and Public Health Impacts

The proliferation of RV camping on the streets of Seattle has created an unsafe and unsanitary environment that has a direct negative impact on the health of Seattle neighborhoods and the Puget Sound ecosystem.

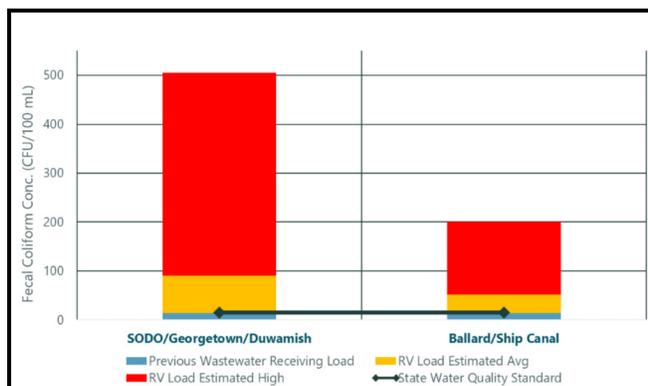
Since 2015, the number of RVs located within the SODO and Ballard neighborhoods has increased dramatically, now totaling more than 600. Based on EPA statistics, a typical “camped” RV accumulates more than a hundred gallons of wastewater each week. We have witnessed RVs regularly discharging their accumulated sewer wastes, particularly the more problematic “black water” sewage, directly into storm drains. Only half of this sewer waste is diverted into water treatment facilities, leaving the other half of the waste — **likely equivalent to more than 1 million gallons of sewage annually** — to drain directly into our waterways including the Duwamish River and Salmon Bay.



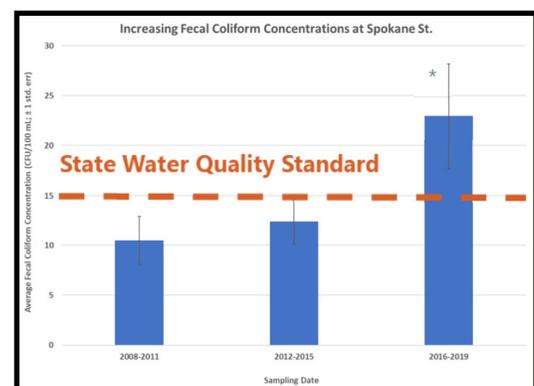
Earlier this year, the SODO BIA and Ballard Alliance commissioned Anchor QEA, an environmental science and engineering firm that specializes in water quality studies, to evaluate the extent of this growing problem. The study found significant spikes in fecal coliform levels in our waterways and suggests even broader concerns ranging from Hepatitis A outbreaks to PCB contamination in fish which feed Washington’s orca population. In addition, introduction of this new contamination source turns back the clock on recent efforts to improve regional water quality.

RV Waste Creates Surge of Fecal Coliform

Estimated Potential Impact



King County Monitoring Data

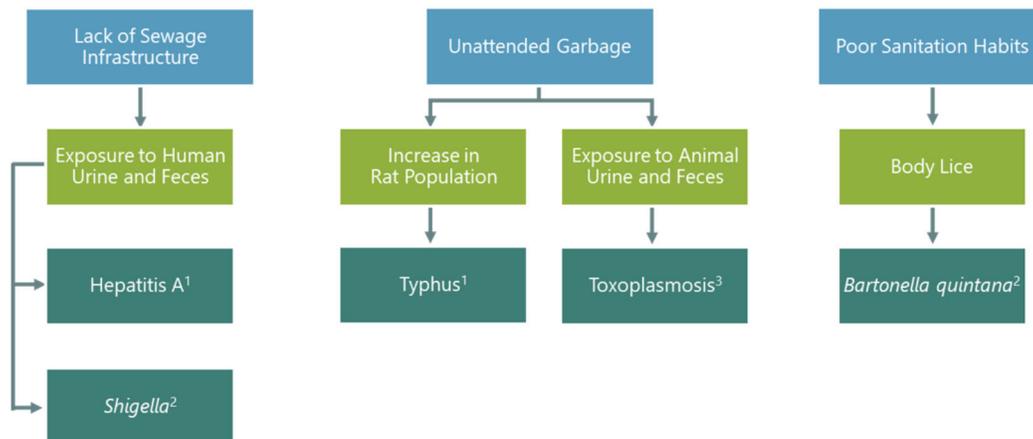


S. Lander St. Storm Drain Sampling — 300 Times Above Standard

- Sampled June 7, 2019 – Small storm (0.1” rain)
- Measured fecal coliform: 4,100 CFU/100 mL

Public Health Risks

- Illegal dumping of sewage and trash, along with unsanitary conditions in RV encampments, increases public health risks in many ways.

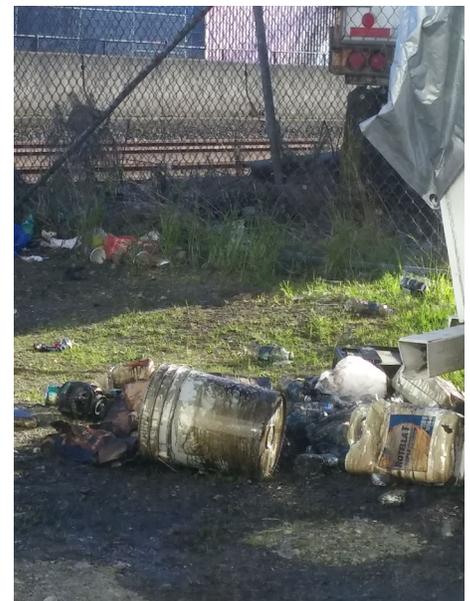


Lessons Learned from other cities:

- **L.A.:** Last year Typhus cases doubled over 5-year average
- **San Diego:** 592 cases of Hepatitis A

Additional Environmental and Public Health Issues

- PCB releases
 - High PCB levels documented
 - Reverses progress of Duwamish Waterway cleanup
- RV fires
 - Contaminants released to air, water, and soil
 - Paints, plastics, and insulation
 - Gasoline and diesel fuel
 - Antifreeze and battery acids
 - Engine and metal degreasers and motor oils
- Fuel theft and spillage



Study data suggest these potential outcomes:

- Loss of progress on Duwamish Waterway
- Degradation of Puget Sound water quality and fish habitat
- High potential for hepatitis and typhus outbreaks
- Legal action by environmental advocates or infected residents
- Increased loss of life among homeless population
- Proliferation of rats, lice, fleas, and other vermin
- E. coli infections
- Increased toxin levels in fish and marine mammals



For more information, please contact:

Erin Goodman, SODO BIA –
erin@sodoseattle.org

Mike Stewart, Ballard BIA –
mike@ballardalliance.com

Clay Patmont, Anchor QEA –
cpatmont@anchoragea.com