

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. This is Casey Dolan with local news and commentary for Thursday, May 30, 2024.

Public comment on a proposed expansion of the Dabob Bay Natural Area has opened up as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) considers adding 671 acres to the protected area, according to the *Peninsula Daily News*. Kristin Ohlson-Kiehn, recreation and conservation division manager for the DNR said, “The decision that we’re hoping to make will be about the establishment of the boundary.” Ohlson-Kiehn told Jefferson County commissioners this past Tuesday that a community meeting would be held at the Laurel B. Johnson Community Center in Coyle at 6pm, June 17 for members of the public to provide feedback on the proposal. The proposed expansion would add 671 acres of county land adjacent to the existing Dabob Bay Natural Area, placing them in conservation status and allowing DNR to use state funding to purchase replacement lands for the various beneficiaries of state-managed lands.

Peter Bahls, executive director of the Northwest Watershed Institute, a Port Townsend-based organization that has sought to protect the area around Dabob Bay for years, told the *Peninsula Daily News* that the lands in the proposed expansion area include all of the remaining globally imperiled forest plant associations on state land, and are already protected under other environmental standards. DNR cannot harvest the area in the same way it does other trust lands.

FOX13 reports that a study conducted by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) looked at the hourly wage needed to afford rent in every state in 2023, and Washington topped the list. Housing costs are unattainable for many, leaving rent as the more affordable option. For fair market rent in Washington, a one-bedroom averages \$1,577 per month, and a 2-bedroom averages \$1,889 per month. The NLIHC study showed that in Washington, you need to make \$36.33 an hour to afford a two-bedroom rental.

More alarming is the number of hours needed to work a minimum-wage job to afford rent. For Snohomish and King counties, people working minimum-wage jobs need to work more than 80 hours per week just to afford a one-bedroom rental. Washington ranks fifth-highest in the U.S. for the hourly wage needed to afford a fair market two-bedroom rental without paying more than one-third of their income. The top 5 list is as follows: California – \$42.25; Hawaii – \$41.83; Massachusetts – \$41.64; New York – \$40.08; and Washington – \$36.33.

News website Nonstop Local reports that a ban on foam packaging containing polyfluoroalkyl substances – otherwise known as PFAS – goes into effect in Washington State starting Saturday, June 1. This will be a ban on the sale of expanded polystyrene, more commonly known as packaging foam. The ban will include cups, plates, to-go clamshells, trays and food containers, as well as single-use coolers. PFAS are “forever chemicals” that were previously used to greaseproof and waterproof food packaging, such as bags, bowls, plates, trays and cups. According to the Department of Ecology, expanded polystyrene and PFAS are harmful to the environment and our health, with the PFAS from packaging leaching into food.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has launched a new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website that is specifically designed for people living in Washington state – <https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/injury-and-violence-prevention/suicide-prevention/988-suicide-crisis-lifeline>. 988 is the nationwide,

three-digit dialing code that connects anyone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis with a trained counselor. The 988 Lifeline is free, confidential, and available every day via phone call, text, or online chat. DOH's new website is part of the state's larger 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Awareness Campaign and is designed to build upon and complement the existing national 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.