



## Dirty car? Take it to the car wash!

By Joshua Putnam – Pacific Resident

Fresh air and sunshine. Gleaming soapsuds and the spray of a hose. Flawless paint and gleaming chrome emerging from oily grime. Washing, waxing, and polishing our cars has been an American tradition for generations. But as our population goes up, and we own more cars, that tradition poses a growing risk of pollution.

Where does that soap, oil, and grime *go* once it's off your car? How much of our limited drinking water supply runs into a storm drain each time a car is washed in a driveway or on the street? And where does that storm drain empty its polluted runoff? If you wash your car at home, chances are good the runoff ends up in the same water where children swim, salmon spawn, and eagles fish.

Recognizing the possible damage from car washing, some people use biodegradable cleaners. Even that does not stop the flow of oily, contaminated water from reaching our rivers and lakes, or leaching into our groundwater.

Luckily, there is an easy alternative to washing the car at home. Commercial car wash facilities are required to meet environmental rules that reduce water use and stop the majority of pollution from reaching our natural waterways. To encourage local residents to use commercial car washes and help protect our local environment, the City of Pacific is partnering with [insert name of car wash] to offer discount coupons on car washes.

Wash water is not the only threat cars pose to our local waterways. Many cars, as they age, develop drips and leaks that spread oil, transmission fluid, antifreeze, and other chemicals on streets and driveways. Those chemicals, too, make their way into our storm drains, or soak into our groundwater. If your parking spot features oily stains, don't just wash them down the drain – have your car serviced. In addition to prolonging engine life and keeping your driveway looking cleaner, fixing vehicle leaks can help keep our groundwater clean, our salmon healthy, and our beaches fit for summer fun.

Please help us preserve the natural beauty that makes Pacific such a great place to live and work. Take advantage of our local car washes, and have any vehicle drips or leaks fixed promptly.