



NASA-Originated Cleantech Solution Sets Sights on Tacoma for West Coast HQ

Serial Entrepreneurs Collaborate with City of Tacoma to Usher in a Sustainable Future for Washington’s Waterways

From the Hudson River in New York City to the Foss Waterway in Tacoma, man-made toxins called polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) threaten both marine and human life. Though the U.S. and many other countries have banned the manufacturing of PCBs for more than 30 years, these chemicals remain the most widespread contaminant in the world. Today, [94 percent](#) of U.S. rivers and streams sampled by the EPA still test positive for PCBs — and traditional remediation methods like dredging only provide a temporary solution to the problem and are cost-prohibitive, time-consuming, and pose significant health threats to humans, wildlife, and the environment.

Serial tech entrepreneurs Ian Doromal and Sergie “Serg” Albino co-founded [ecoSPEARS](#) to remove these harmful toxins forever using a breakthrough approach that is both cost-effective and sustainable. “Serg is a former NASA team member with a track record in engineering and manufacturing, and I’ve always had a knack for bringing the right people together to solve important problems,” Ian shared. “Launching ecoSPEARS was an opportunity to completely eliminate a major environmental issue using science and technology.”



The technology, developed by NASA and licensed to Ian and Serg in 2017, acts like a “sponge” in contaminated sediment, drawing out PCBs and other toxins, then neutralizing

them. The ecoSPEARS team partners with industry and government entities to lead environmental remediation projects across the U.S. and as far as Guam and Sweden. Now, the Florida-based company is focused on cleaning up Washington's waterways and has selected Tacoma as their "West Coast HQ".

As newcomers to the Pacific Northwest startup scene, the ecoSPEARS team leveraged collaborations with local incubators and the City of Tacoma to grow their Washington network and secure key contracts with companies like Kaiser Aluminum. "It's hard to do business in places where you don't have representation," Ian said, "So introductions to industry stakeholders have been incredibly valuable."

"The City of Tacoma began to develop a relationship with ecoSPEARS in January 2019," said Elly Walkowiak, Assistant Director of the City of Tacoma, Community and Economic Development Department. "We strengthened our connection with this East Coast-based company over time, undaunted by the pandemic. The synergy we share in our commitment to innovation, healing the environment and providing new growth opportunities is remarkable. We welcome ecoSPEARS to Tacoma wholeheartedly and look forward to creating a brighter future for our community in concert with their restorative global impact."

"Everyone here is really focused on fostering a community of innovation and environmental stewardship," Ian added. "We see Tacoma as the hub that allows us to conduct projects all along the West Coast."

To learn more about ecoSPEARS, visit ecospears.com and follow them on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Follow [Startup253](#) to keep up with stories from the local startup ecosystem and head to www.edbTacomaPierce.org/technology.

About the Tacoma-Pierce County Economic Development Board: Since 1978, the private, 501(c)(6) nonprofit [EDB](#) has been laser-focused on recruiting new firms to Pierce County, retaining those that are here, and helping all of them expand. The EDB supports companies to create new jobs and to grow the economy of the South Sound and Washington State, USA. In the past two decades, the EDB has worked with companies that have made over \$1.6 billion in capital investments and created over 25,000 jobs.

The mission of the Tacoma-Pierce County Tech Cluster Acceleration Initiative is to foster a lattice of innovation that makes the South Sound a hub for technology business talent. The Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County, in collaboration with Startup253 and s2s Public Relations and Communications is proud to share stories like this that showcase Pierce County technology companies who exemplify "Where Tech Lives."