

City Cancels Free Pearl Jam Concert

By [Tom Phalen](#)

The free concert by rising Seattle rock band Pearl Jam, scheduled Saturday afternoon at Gas Works Park, has been canceled, the band announced yesterday.

The band said the concert was canceled by city officials who grew increasingly concerned about security as attendance estimates rose. Two months ago, attendance was projected at 5,000, but this week producers expected 20,000 or more fans might show up.

Pearl Jam has become increasingly well-known nationally after recent appearances on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" and on MTV. Its album "Ten" is among the 20 best-selling in the country, according to Billboard magazine.

Mark Rose of Mark Allen Productions, the company handling support services for the concert, said he was notified of the cancellation yesterday by Virginia Swanson of the city's Parks Department.

Rose said she told him city officials were concerned about managing crowds both at Gas Works and Seattle Center, where the annual Northwest Folklife Festival will be this weekend.

Swanson could not be reached for comment last night, but another city official said the cancellation was caused by the increased crowd estimates.

When Pearl Jam first approached the committee about the concert, the estimated crowd was 5,000, said Anne Levinson, aide to Mayor Norm Rice.

By this week, that figure had risen to 20,000, and with the expected security and service demands of other events over the Memorial Day weekend, it was felt the concert would strain city services.

"The city does its best to make sure an event is well-handled," she said. ". . . A size change of this magnitude is difficult to handle."

Permits for such occasions are issued through a committee made up of several city departments, including police, engineering and parks.

Pearl Jam lead singer Eddie Vedder said the group had demonstrated its intent to meet all the city's conditions for sanitation, security and first aid.

"We had people who knew what they were doing," said Vedder. "This was not a fly-by-night thing. We had people who were organized. We had all the permits."

Vedder said city officials were willing to reschedule the concert, but because of the band's touring commitments, nothing could take place before September.

"A large part of this was to get kids registered to vote," said Vedder. "September wouldn't leave much time."

Earlier yesterday there was talk of scheduling the concert Sunday at outdoor facilities on the Columbia Rose in George, Grant County, but that won't happen, Rose said.