



Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee

King Street Center, 201 S Jackson St, MS: KSC-NR-0508, Seattle, WA 98104
206-477-4435

MEMBERS:

Alderwood Water and Wastewater District
City of Algona
City of Auburn
City of Bellevue
City of Black Diamond
City of Bothell
City of Brier
City of Carnation
Cedar River Water and Sewer District
Coal Creek Utility District
Cross Valley Water District
Highlands Sewer District
City of Issaquah
City of Kent
City of Kirkland
City of Lake Forest Park
Lakehaven Water and Sewer District
City of Mercer Island
Midway Sewer District
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
Northeast Sammamish Sewer and Water District
Northshore Utility District
Olympic View Water and Sewer District
City of Pacific
City of Redmond
City of Renton
Ronald Wastewater District
Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District
City of Seattle
Skyway Water and Sewer District
Soos Creek Water and Sewer District
Southwest Suburban Sewer District
City of Tukwila
Valley View Sewer District
Vashon Sewer District
Woodinville Water District

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Dow Constantine
County Executive, King County
401 Fifth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

SUBJECT: Wastewater Treatment Division 2021 Rate Recommendation

Dear Executive Constantine:

The Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWWPAAC) is unified in its opposition to the Wastewater Treatment Division's (WTD) rate proposal for 2021, and its projected rate forecast for 2022-2026. The proposed increase of 9.5 percent is a massive increase over the forecast of 4.5 percent released in June 2019, and it is a complete surprise to all MWWPAAC agencies and our customers. The region is already struggling with affordability and this rate increase, coupled with the impact of COVID-19, will create significant hardships for our communities and customers.

We value a close working relationship with WTD and expect more transparency and engagement when changes of such high magnitude are being considered. The reason given for the steep rate increase – funding a backlog of Asset Management projects – makes sense. But Asset Management has not been a topic on a MWWPAAC agenda since October 2018. Moreover, the background materials sent recently in connection with Asset Management have not provided the level of information needed to justify the increase. We still don't have the answers we need to make an informed decision.

MWWPAAC must also, again, raise the issue of our virtually nonexistent role in the rate review process. We know that rates aren't developed in a day; rather, it's a months-long process. It is unacceptable that MWWPAAC does not see a rate proposal until the eleventh hour, on the eve of its transmittal to the King County Council. Many MWWPAAC agencies must review and respond before they have time to discuss the proposal with elected officials at public meetings. An increased role in governance by MWWPAAC members is of great interest and will be included in the ongoing contract negotiations.

This rate proposal and the complete absence of a collaborative process to share information to justify the proposal reflects the lack of a partnership between WTD and the agencies that make up MWWPAAC. **Please consider either a zero percent rate increase or adopting the original projection of a 4.5 percent increase.**

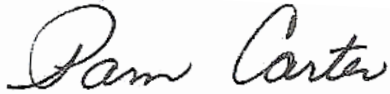
The Honorable Dow Constantine

March 25, 2020

Page 2

Every MWPAAC member agency understands the challenge of balancing asset replacement with rate stability. We live that challenge every day. Only together, as true partners with WTD, will we find a solution that meets the needs of the wastewater system while providing a smoother and more affordable rate path for all our customers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Pamela Carter
MWPAAC Chair

cc: MWPAAC Members
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Mark Isaacson, Division Director, Wastewater Treatment Division, DNRP