

TIME RECEIVED

June 6, 2011 6:28:34 PM PDT

REMOTE CSID

DURATION

45

PAGES

1

STATUS

Received

Jun 06 2011 6:15PM

p. 1

FALL CITY METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 1180
FALL CITY, WA 98024

June 3, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am writing to express strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Float Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims are not wearing life vests.

The Snoqualmie River Float Taskforce was formed by a group of volunteers wanting to make the waters a safer place for regional visitors in the town of Fall City. This year we have received strong support from the King County Sheriff's Department Marine Division, Department of Fish and Wildlife, King County Solid Waste, Friends of the Trail, King County Parks, Fall City Metropolitan Park District, and many other groups and organizations.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance.

Sincerely,



Terri A. Campbell

Office Administrator

Fall City Metropolitan Park District and Snoqualmie River Float Taskforce

Don Hoch
Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

1111 Israel Road S.W. • P.O. Box 42650 • Olympia, WA 98504-2650 • (360) 902-8500
TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf): (360) 664-3133
www.parks.wa.gov

June 2, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
King County Courthouse
516 3rd Avenue Room 1200
Seattle WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I commend King County for considering an ordinance to require U.S. Coast Guard approved personal floatation devices (PFDs or life jackets) to be worn on major rivers in King County through the summer recreational season. Others are considering or have adopted similar policies: Spokane County has an ordinance requiring life jackets on one of its rivers. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is testing the impact of life jacket wear requirements on some of its waters. The national Boating Safety Advisory Council recently recommended that the U.S. Coast Guard adopt a national mandate for life jacket wear on all recreational vessels 18 feet and under, including PWCs, and on all manually powered boats.

The statewide Boating Safety Program at Washington State Parks recognizes that wearing a life jacket, completing boater safety education, and not boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs, are crucial to reduce the number of accidents, injuries and fatalities that take place every year on Washington's waterways.

Rivers in Washington are dangerous in the springtime when water levels are high and swift, and water temperatures are very cold. In 2010, there were 18 boating related fatalities in Washington; eight were on rivers and ten involved manually powered boats. So far this year, there have already been seven boating fatalities in Washington – and the boating season has just begun. Both in Washington and nationwide, most boating deaths each year are due to capsize or falls overboard followed by drowning and 80-85 percent of those who drown were not wearing life jackets.

Washington State law requires that children ages 12 and under wear a Coast Guard-approved life vest on vessels less than 19 feet long. However, we recommend them for all boaters. This summer, Washington State Parks Boating Safety Program has teamed up with the National Safe Boating Council in a campaign to stress life jacket wear for adults. The "Wear It Washington" campaign's goal is to encourage everyone to stay safe on the water by always wearing a life jacket.

Sincerely,

Susan Kavanaugh
Washington State Boating Law Administrator

FALL CITY METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 1180
FALL CITY, WA 98024

June 3, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am writing to express strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Float Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims are not wearing life vests.

The Snoqualmie River Float Taskforce was formed by a group of volunteers wanting to make the waters a safer place for regional visitors in the town of Fall City. This year we have received strong support from the King County Sheriff's Department Marine Division, Department of Fish and Wildlife, King County Solid Waste, Friends of the Trail, King County Parks, Fall City Metropolitan Park District, and many other groups and organizations.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Lee Moderow
Snoqualmie River Float Taskforce

June 3, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am writing to express strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Float Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

Rivers are inherently dangerous places to play, especially in the springtime when flows are high, swift and cold.

This year we are experiencing an unusually heavy amount of mountain snowmelt that may keep King County river flows high well into the summer recreation season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims are not wearing life vests.

According to Public Health – Seattle and King County, on average there are 23 drowning deaths annually in King County, with 60 percent occurring on open water, including rivers, lakes and the Puget Sound.

We understand that in a 2010 study of Cedar River recreational use by King County, it was found in sample observations that 61 percent of children (ages 1 to 11) and 98 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) were not wearing PFDs when floating the Cedar River.

Washington State law already requires that children ages 12 and under wear a Coast Guard-approved life vest on vessels less than 19 feet long.

As a professional fishing guide, I always require that my clients wear an inflatable life vest. My clients rarely put up any resistance to wearing the PFD and many clients comment on how comfortable they are at the end of a day on the water.

Every time I am out on moving water I see a number of hazards, especially during summer months when the river level drops and funnels the flow directly at the hazard, such as a log jam or boulder field. I also see punctured rafts, punctured inner tubes, and overturned canoes wedged against log jams. I personally feel that is it insane for anyone to be on moving water in Washington without a life vest. I fully support this ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Larry Gossett

June 1, 2011

Page 2

James C. Grieve

President,

Northwest Fly Fishing Adventures

www.northwestflyfishingadventures.com

Mobile: 425-359-3137



American Red Cross

Serving King & Kitsap Counties

Seattle Office	Bremerton Office
1900 25th Avenue South	811 Pacific Avenue
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Seattle, WA 98114	Bremerton, WA 98337
Tel: 206.323.2345	Tel: 360.377.3761
Fax: 206.325.8211	Fax: 360.792.0498

TTY: 206.720.5392
seattleredcross.org

June 2, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200/King County Courthouse
Chinook Building
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 810
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am writing to express strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Float Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

Rivers are inherently dangerous places to play, especially in the springtime when flows are high, swift and cold.

This year we are experiencing an unusually heavy amount of mountain snowmelt that may keep King County river flows high well into the summer recreation season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims are not wearing life vests.

According to Public Health – Seattle and King County, on average there are 23 drowning deaths annually in King County, with 60 percent occurring on open water, including rivers, lakes and the Puget Sound.

We understand that in a 2010 study of Cedar River recreational use by King County, it was found in sample observations that 61 percent of children (ages 1 to 11) and 98 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) were not wearing PFDs when floating the Cedar River.

Washington State law already requires that children ages 12 and under wear a Coast Guard-approved life vest on vessels less than 19 feet long.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Randy Hutson
CEO

In partnership with



Board Chair Deborah G. Haug **Vice Chair** Jonelle M.C. Johnson **Secretary** Ann L. Sobil **Treasurer** Scott M. Edwards
Chief Executive Officer Randy Hutson

The mission of the American Red Cross is to provide relief to victims of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.



Thomas O'Keefe, PhD
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director
3537 NE 87th St.
Seattle, WA 98115
okeefe@americanwhitewater.org

June 2, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
King County Courthouse
516 Third Ave., Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Ordinance relating to protecting public safety by requiring personal floatation devices on major King County rivers

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

We are writing to express our support for an ordinance relating to protecting public safety by requiring personal floatation devices on major King County rivers.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) river conservation organization founded in 1954. We have over 6,000 members and 100 local-based affiliate clubs, representing approximately whitewater paddlers across the nation. A significant percentage of American Whitewater members reside in King County and local residents were among our founding members. King County is blessed with some of the nation's most outstanding whitewater resources, a defining quality of life for our region and the reason many of our members make their home here. American Whitewater's mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. American Whitewater's Safety Code was originally published in 1959 to standardize safety practices on whitewater rivers including a standard system for rating whitewater. Our International Whitewater Scale of Difficulty where whitewater is rated on a I-V scale is widely used and recognized. Of relevance to the proposed ordinance, our safety code also identifies the need to wear a life jacket.

Snowpack this year is well above normal levels. While our members are out on rivers year around including during the high water events of winter storms, we eagerly anticipate these rare opportunities to enjoy high water boating in the spring and early summer. For many however these conditions can be hazardous and we support a program focused on wearing Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs). A simple analysis of drowning statistics reveals that encouraging, or in this case requiring, use of PFDs and enforcing alcohol laws are the two most effective measures in reducing recreational drowning deaths.

In recent years the Sheriff's office has implemented "river closures" which have been of significant concern to our organization in light of the fact that they typically occur when conditions are ideal for whitewater recreation. The idea of closing or opening rivers implies a decision that rivers are safe at some times and not at others. From a national perspective, it is extremely rare for jurisdictions to institute safety closures as the associated judgement calls that are made raise potential liability issues. All rivers have inherent dangers and risks at all times

and we believe the approach of the proposed ordinance and making sure individuals are properly equipped is a much more effective and responsible approach.

While it is our understanding that the proposed emergency ordinance will expire on October 31, 2011 we request that an analysis of the effectiveness of this ordinance be conducted. This should be completed prior to the 2012 summer recreation season and before a more permanent set of regulations are put in place. The one concern we have is whether a regulatory approach is really more effective than a voluntary education campaign such as the Wear It! Campaign¹ that many other states and jurisdictions across the country are actively implementing. The effectiveness review should address this question.

Given our decades-long history of safety education on rivers and our national perspective we request that we be considered an interested stakeholder in any future discussions on the issues covered in this ordinance. We would welcome to the opportunity to participate in education and outreach efforts.

Sincerely,



Thomas O'Keefe, PhD
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director

cc:

Dow Constantine, King County Executive
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Mark Isaacson, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division, DNRP
The Honorable Sue Rahr, King County Sheriff

¹ <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com>

June 1, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am writing to express my strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Floatation Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season. As an Assistant Fire Chief and a Swift Water Rescue Technician I believe this ordinance if adopted and enforced can make a difference in preventing deaths on our counties rivers.

Rivers are inherently dangerous places to play, especially in the springtime when flows are high, swift and cold. From personal observation and emergency response experience it is obvious to me that many of those using our rivers during this time of year are not aware of the dangers and are not experienced with moving water safety. This year due to the unusually heavy amount of mountain snowmelt our King County river flows may remain high well into the summer recreation season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. According to Public Health – Seattle and King County, on average there are 23 drowning deaths annually in King County, with 60 percent occurring on open water, including rivers, lakes and the Puget Sound. U.S. Coast Guard studies have shown that in more than 85% of drowning's the individuals were not wearing PFD's.

We understand that in a 2010 study of Cedar River recreational use by King County, it was found in sample observations that 61 percent of children (ages 1 to 11) and 98 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) were not wearing PFDs when floating the Cedar River. From general observations I have made on the Green River this is very true there as well. There is a general lack of awareness by the general public of the need for life vests on these waters.

Washington State law already requires that children ages 12 and under wear a Coast Guard-approved life vest on vessels less than 19 feet long.

The Honorable Larry Gossett

June 1, 2011

Page 2

As an emergency responder to water related emergencies on our rivers I know that the use of PFD's can make a difference, that needless tragedies can be avoided and tax dollars saved by not having to run rescue operations or body recoveries that could be prevented by the adoption of this ordinance.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Young, Asst. Fire Chief / Swift Water Rescue Tech
Mountain View Fire and Rescue

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
United States Coast Guard
Sector Puget Sound

1519 Alaskan Way South
Seattle, WA 98134-1192
Staff Symbol: sd
Phone: (206)217-6207
FAX: (206)217-6255

5700
June 02, 2011

Metropolitan King County Council
516 3rd Ave., Rm 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear King County Council Members,

I am writing to express the Coast Guard's strong support for the Emergency Ordinance proposed to the King County Council, which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personnel flotation device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

With the heavy amount of snowmelt and resulting cold temperatures of Puget Sound area rivers, I cannot overstate the importance of wearing a PFD. Sudden cold water immersion, even on hot summer days, can incapacitate a person due to shock and disorientation, often before hypothermia sets in, leaving use of a lifejacket as the only means to assist the person to be able to self rescue, or to remain afloat long enough for rescuers to arrive. Extensive research has shown that even strong swimmers can experience difficulty and drown within minutes of cold water immersion unless they are fully acclimated to cold temperatures over a period of time – which will not occur with sudden immersion from a boating or rafting accident.

According to Public Health of Seattle and King County, on average there are 23 drowning deaths annually in King County, with 60 percent occurring on open water, including rivers, lakes and the Puget Sound. Between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims were not wearing life vests. I am confident that many of these would have survived had they worn a PFD.

I most strongly support and recommend implementation of this ordinance, and I commend the King County Council and Executive in taking this proactive, cost efficient and effective step to better protect the boating public on the rivers of King County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. M. Pollock".

S. M. POLLOCK
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Deputy Commander
Sector Puget Sound

Copy: King County Council Members

ATTN: Tom Bristow, Chief of Staff

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Mr. Dow Constantine, King County Executive

Ms. Sue Rahr, King County Sheriff

Dr. David Fleming, Director, Public Health – Seattle & King County

Ms. Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

RIVER SAFETY COUNCIL
Advocating for the safety of river users of all ages

June 2, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett Council@KingCounty.gov
Chair, King County Council
King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200
Seattle WA 98104

Re: King County emergency ordinance requiring personal floatation devices (PFDs) to be worn by river users on major King County rivers through October 31, 2011

Dear Councilmember Gossett:
And members of King County Council

We are writing to express support for an ordinance that would require persons entering a river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD, or life jacket) through the summer 2011 recreation season.

The lack of PFD use by many river users has long been a concern of the River Safety Council. It was no surprise that a 2010 study of Cedar River recreational use by King County found in sample observations that 61% of children (ages 1 to 11) and 98% of youth (ages 12 to 17) were not wearing PFDs when floating the Cedar River. This is generally consistent with our observations on other King County rivers as well.

Rivers can be dangerous places to play, especially in spring when flows are high, fast and cold. This year we are experiencing an unusually heavy amount of mountain snowmelt that may keep King County river flows high well into the summer recreation season.

The ordinance will help protect swimmers, tubers, boaters and fishers. We do have concerns, however, that this ordinance fails to adequately address the swimmers who enjoy our rivers when temperatures are warmer and river flows slower.

The River Safety Council is dedicated to advocating for the safety of river users of all ages – swimmers, tubers, boaters, fishers and other river users. For a number of years the River Safety Council has sent spring press information to all daily papers in Washington, some community papers and many broadcast outlets. And we are currently distributing a Tuber Safety flyer in printed and electronic form. We would like to be considered a stakeholder on this issue and are interested in ways we can assist King County in this public safety effort.

Yours truly,

Judy Fillips
River Safety Council
3405 SE 7th Street
Renton WA 98058

Cc: Dow Constantine, King County Executive
Mark Isaacson, Division Director, Water & Land Resources Division, DNRP



Board of Directors:
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Glen Gobin, ti 8otX - Vice Chairman
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Don Hatch Jr., *SPAT-UB-KUD* - Board Member
Mark Hatch, dxs\$ayil - Board Member

6406 Marine DR Tulalip, WA 98271
Phone (360) 716-4000
Fax (360) 716-0606

The Tulalip Tribes are the successors in interest in the Snohomish, Snoqualmie and Skykomish tribes and other tribes and bands signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliot.

June 1, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

Tulalip Tribes would like to express strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Float Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

Rivers are inherently dangerous places to recreate, especially in the springtime when flows are high, swift and cold. This year we are experiencing an unusually heavy amount of mountain snowmelt that may keep river flows high well into the summer recreation season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims are not wearing life vests.

Tulalip Tribes has heard from many boaters in King County that river safety is of paramount concern. We understand that in a 2010 study of Cedar River recreational use by King County, it was found in sample observations that 61 percent of children (ages 1 to 11) and 98 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) were not wearing PFDs when floating the Cedar River. PFDs represent an excellent first step in keeping all recreators safe.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Abigail Hook
Hydrologist
Tulalip Tribes

Laura Clawson
2018 NE 28th Pl.
Renton, WA 98056

June 8, 2011

Sue Rahr
King Co. Sheriff
516 Third Ave., Room W-116
Seattle, Washington 98104

Christie True, Director
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
201 S. Jackson St., Suite 600
Seattle, Washington 98104-3855


Re: Notice of Cedar River Closure

Dear Sheriff Rahr and Ms. True,

Thank you for mailing the referenced notice to citizens in the Cedar River area. Friends of our family lost a 4-year-old boy, and nearly lost his two brothers and father, while the mother watched from shore in a log jam on a river in Snohomish County several years ago. I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to educate and warn citizens of river hazards, for closing the dangerous mile stretch of the Cedar River, and for imposing fines on violators. If such measures had been in place in Snohomish our friends would *not* have been on the river and a tragic accident would have been averted.

I'm proud of the Sheriff's Office and King County's parks department. This is an example of good government in action.

Sincerely,


Laura Clawson