



City of Bothell

May 12, 2026

Metropolitan King County Council
Email clerk.council@kingcounty.gov

Subject: King County 2027 Wastewater Treatment Rates

Dear Chair Perry and King County Council:

As a city that operates a utility within the King County Wastewater service area, Bothell is extremely concerned about impacts to rate-payer affordability and equity from the proposed 2027 wastewater treatment rate increases. The Wastewater Treatment Division is currently scoping for the King County Regional Wastewater Service Plan (RWSP) to address long-range planning that will influence future rates. Bothell requests that the RWSP scoping include an evaluation of more equitable sewer treatment charges for regional jurisdictions.

The current rate forecast includes 12.75 percent annual rate increase for 2027-2030 and an 11.25 percent annual rate increase for 2031 and 2032. These increases will double current rates by 2032. Much of the forecasted increase can be attributed to projects that are essential to accommodating current customers and future regional growth. However, \$3.4 billion of the total \$11.4 billion capital plan is associated with construction of a new combined sewer overflow (CSO) storage facility at the mouth of the Duwamish River that will be used to store high sewer flows resulting from stormwater draining directly into Seattle sewer mains. The CSO project cost is responsible for much of the rate increase without consideration that Bothell, along with many other jurisdictions, will not contribute flow to this facility.

While we understand that the CSO project must move forward to meet consent decree requirements, Bothell ratepayers should not have to pay for this expensive project that addresses excess combined sewer flow from another agency. Bothell, along with other contract agencies, performs proactive sewer restoration activities to reduce this sort of inflow and infiltration (I/I) at the source. The proposed treatment rate increases would negatively impact our ability to complete additional I/I mitigation projects and reduce sewer flow from Bothell.

Scoping for the King County RWSP update should include equitable rate structure alternatives. Jurisdictions with combined sewer, high I/I, and excess flow to treatment/CSO facilities should pay more than jurisdictions with low I/I. One option that should be considered is to charge

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jurisdictions for actual/metered sewer flow and their proportionate share of necessary capital improvements – excluding CSO projects that benefit only specific jurisdictions. Such an evaluation would enable King County to consider a more equitable rate structure for all partner jurisdictions.

We appreciate your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you and/or the Metropolitan King County Council on this matter.

Sincerely on behalf of the Bothell City Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mason Thompson', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mason Thompson

Mayor

cc: Girmay Zahilay, King County Executive, kcexec@kingcounty.gov
John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, jtaylor@kingcounty.gov
Kamuron Gurol, Director, Wastewater Treatment Division, kgurol@kingcounty.gov