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# MSWAC

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Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee

King Street Center ▪ 201 South Jackson Street, Suite 5701 ▪ Seattle, WA 98104-3855

May 14, 2021

To: King County Executive Dow Constantine  
King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski  
King County Councilmember Girmay Zahilay  
King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert  
King County Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles  
King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove  
King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci  
King County Councilmember Pete Von Reichbauer  
King County Councilmember Joe McDermott  
King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn

CC: Christie True, DNRP Director  
Pat D. McLaughlin, Solid Waste Division Director

RE: ADVISORY NOTE IN SUPPORT OF THE 2022 SOLID WASTE RATE PROPOSAL

The Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC) recognizes the need for an adequate revenue stream to support the regional solid waste system and ensure continued progress on key capital projects such as transfer station modernization, maximizing disposal capacity at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill, diverting resources from disposal and expanded recycling services. Toward this objective, King County's Solid Waste Division has proposed a rate that would raise the current per-ton disposal rate by 9.4%, or the equivalent of an additional \$0.71 on the average monthly bill for curbside customers.

Fiscal accountability and responsible stewardship of public funds is a priority, especially as the region recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic impacts that are still being felt by many of our residents. We appreciate the Division's efforts to reduce or delay spending to avoid a rate increase in 2021. We believe the proposed 2022 rate increase will fund key initiatives and well position the division to maintain a smooth and steady rate path in future years.

MSWAC is committed to programs and services that protect the environment and enhance the quality of life in our communities. Ensuring our residents continue to have access to the full range of essential waste disposal and recycling services King County provides is among our top priorities. We are also invested in the division's long-range comprehensive planning goals to boost recycling rates, modernize the Northeast and South County Recycling and Transfer Stations (with expanded services), and advance actions to mitigate climate change and address environmental inequities.

The Division's 2022 proposal will fund our key priorities including:

- Decreasing the tonnage of materials being landfilled by adopting waste prevention and resource recovery programs that are beneficial to the environment and local economy.
- Access to recycling and waste disposal services seven days a week at eight transfer stations and six days a week at two rural drop boxes.
- Capital improvements that generate family-wage jobs in the construction trades and expand access to recycling in communities, such as south King County, that currently have limited access to such services.
- Through the CleanUp LIFT discount, reducing financial burdens to customers who spend a disproportionate amount of their income on waste disposal and recycling.

This proposal was discussed in the January, February, and March MSWAC meetings this year and we appreciate the dialogue with County staff. One option discussed was to postpone a rate increase once again for 2022, however, support was not expressed for that option given the cuts in services and investment that would likely result. Instead, we favor a gradual and incremental approach to rate increases, which is consistent with other rate discussions at the Sound Cities Association.

We thank the Executive and County Council for considering our input as an advisory committee.

Signed on behalf of MSWAC,

DocuSigned by:

*Mayor Penny Sweet*

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Penny Sweet

Chair, Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Mayor, City of Kirkland

DocuSigned by:

*Linda Knight*

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Linda Knight

Vice-Chair, Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Solid Waste Coordinator, City of Renton