



**Mike O'Brien,
Councilmember**

City of Seattle



Don Davidson,

Mayor

City of Bellevue

November 7, 2011

The Honorable Julia Patterson, Chair
Board of Supervisors
King County Flood Control District
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Board Chair Patterson:

We are writing on behalf of cities concerned over the increase in the King County Flood District's 2012 Proposed Budget. We represent cities that share a common goal of protecting public safety and the region's economic asset base and are committed to accomplishing this shared objective with the Flood Control District. Three of our cities have representatives serving on the District's Advisory Committee and have participated in the review of the proposed budget. We want to make you aware of our concerns as you review the District's 2012 Proposed Budget.

The 2012 Proposed operations and management budget represents an increase of 18% (from \$7,101,188 to \$8,418,689) over the 2011 budget. This increase is coming at a time when many local governments are cutting their budgets. We urge the Board to carefully scrutinize the District's proposed budget and reduce expenses wherever possible.

Our primary concerns are listed below:

- **The addition of six full-time positions to the District's existing staff of 34.** We believe much of the work proposed for these positions could be accomplished through possible redeployment of existing staff and/or the use of contract employees. This would allow the District more flexibility as its workload and type of work changes over time. Significant questions and concerns about the justification for the additional staff positions were raised during the Advisory Committee meetings. We do not believe there was adequate justification provided and do not support adding six additional staff at this time.
- **District administrative expenses are too high.** The cost of a separate executive director, communications, and legal and financial audit services adds nearly \$500,000 to the District's overhead. These administrative functions are in some cases duplicative of the services received from King County staff from the Water and Land Resources Division. We urge the Board to review the continuing need for this level of staffing, or consider an alternate approach to providing these services.

- **We do not support the rationale or the decision to increase the District’s risk management costs by nearly \$500,000.** We appreciate the fact that King County has agreed to cover nearly half of the \$1 million amount originally proposed to be covered by the District. However, we continue to object to the District being charged the remaining amount based on the costs of a legal settlement that predated the formation of the District. We do not believe the District should be assessed this fee without a complete analysis of the actual risk profile of the District.
- **The proposed budget includes over \$300,000 in additional overhead costs.** These increases are a major concern, including:
 - 4% inflationary increase on existing accounts;
 - \$177,000 in increased overhead associated with the proposed addition of 6 FTE’s;
 - \$89,000 charge based on changes in the way the Water and Land Resources Division distributes its overhead costs; and
 - 10% increase in the overhead charge to cover the costs of the County’s new financial system.
- We appreciate that the proposed budget does not include \$50,000 for recreational river safety outreach and education. This is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s recommendation that this item is not a core function of the District and is being done by other agencies. We remain concerned that that the District not become the “funder of last resort”. The District has more than enough on its work plan now. We support the Board’s commitment to continuing work on its core mission of resolving flooding problems without adding to its scope of work.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the 2012 Proposed Budget and look forward to working with you to address these issues.

Sincerely,



Mayor Davidson
City of Bellevue



Councilmember Mike O'Brien
City of Seattle