



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Motion

Proposed No. 2023-0264.1

Sponsors Kohl-Welles and Balducci

1 A MOTION concerning contaminants of emerging concern
2 in wastewater effluent and directing next steps to limit their
3 impact.

4 WHEREAS, the county's regional wastewater system protects human health and
5 the environment by collecting and treating wastewater while recycling valuable resources
6 for the Puget Sound region, and

7 WHEREAS, contaminants of emerging concern are chemicals and toxins that
8 have the potential to impact human health and the environment, and

9 WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities are the recipients of contaminants of
10 emerging concern in wastewater discharged from homes and businesses, and

11 WHEREAS, there are many chemicals used in commerce and contaminants of
12 emerging concern are found in common consumer products, such as pharmaceuticals and
13 personal care products, which are direct exposure points impacting human health, and

14 WHEREAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances chemicals are a group of
15 chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains,
16 grease, and water, and

17 WHEREAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a group of chemicals
18 commonly referred to as PFAS, and

19 WHEREAS, PFAS are a group of chemicals that are extremely resistant to
20 complete breakdown in people and the environment are one concerning type of
21 contaminants of emerging concern, and

22 WHEREAS, some PFAS may impair immune function, cause kidney and
23 testicular cancers in people, and harm aquatic life, birds, and mammals , and

24 WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities are also recipients of PFAS and
25 contaminants of emerging concern, and traditional wastewater treatment or water
26 treatment processes are not designed to remove them, and

27 WHEREAS, source control is a cost-effective method for limiting or eliminating
28 PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern in wastewater, and

29 WHEREAS, the King County council in response to concerns about ongoing
30 health outcomes of southern resident orcas in Puget Sound waters added a proviso to the
31 2021-2022 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 19210, requesting a report on toxics in
32 King County wastewater effluent and evaluating the presence of toxics, and

33 WHEREAS, the county's wastewater treatment division of the department of
34 natural resources and parks briefed the regional water quality committee on February 1,
35 2023, and the committee of the whole on June 21, 2023 on the report evaluating the
36 presence of toxics in the effluent of King County's wastewater treatment plants and the
37 potential impacts of PFAS, and

38 WHEREAS, the research team that briefed the regional water quality committee
39 and committee of the whole concluded that wastewater treatment plants are an ongoing
40 pathway for persistent chemicals into Puget Sound, and

41 WHEREAS, researchers also concluded that such long-lasting chemicals, such as
42 PCBs and PFAS, in King County's treated effluent discharges may accumulate in
43 chinook salmon and could contribute to health effects in southern resident orcas, and

44 WHEREAS, contaminants of emerging concern represent a paramount challenge
45 for King County and all of Washington with far-reaching consequences that put our
46 people, our economy, and our environment at risk, and

47 WHEREAS, King County is committed to protecting the health of our residents
48 and Puget Sound;

49 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

50 A. King County seeks to identify, prioritize, reduce, and control sources,
51 exposures, and risk from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") and contaminants
52 of concern to people and the environment in King County. To accomplish these goals,
53 the county's wastewater treatment division of the department of natural resources and
54 parks is requested to take the following actions:

55 1. Seek operational, capital, or programmatic changes that may address PFAS,
56 in the context of competing priorities, and assessing opportunities for collaborative
57 actions that support our community and external partners;

58 2. Determine the most significant PFAS sources, pathways and exposures in
59 King County, including undertaking voluntary sampling;

60 3. Support source control measures as the most effective and equitable solution,
61 including implementation of the Safer Products for Washington Act;

62 4. Support implementation of state and federal PFAS chemical action plans;

63 5. Comment and engage in the development of regulations and legislation
64 related to PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern;

65 6. Seek funding for projects and research to mitigate PFAS and contaminants of
66 emerging concern in the region, and whenever possible seek producer responsibility for
67 cleanup rather than burdening ratepayers and the public with treatment and cleanup costs;

68 7. Coordinate and share information and strategy with other jurisdictions in
69 Washington, particularly King County's local sewer agency partners served by the
70 regional wastewater system;

71 8. Research wastewater treatment technologies to address and reduce PFAS and
72 contaminants of concern in effluent and biosolids for consideration and implementation,
73 with special consideration for how technologies address the final fate and destruction of
74 those chemicals; and

75 9. Support actions to educate residents and businesses about how they can
76 reduce the use of PFAS and contaminants of concern in homes and businesses, reducing
77 exposure to those chemicals.

78 B. The department of natural resources and parks shall be available to brief the
79 transportation, environment and economy committee and the regional water quality

Motion

- 80 committee in 2024 and as requested by the council, on its efforts to reduce and control
81 PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dave Upthegrove, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None