



King County

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November 4, 2024

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

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits a commercial organics co-digestion planning report in response to Ordinance 19546, Section 129, Proviso P1 and a proposed Motion that would, if enacted, acknowledge receipt of the report.

The report, summarizes a study prepared by a consultant and jointly coordinated by the Solid Waste Division (SWD) and Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP). The purpose of the analysis was to better understand how King County can facilitate the diversion of food waste from the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill; identify and implement the most beneficial use for processed food waste; and determine capacity requirements for co-digesting commercial food waste (CFW) at WTD's South Treatment Plant (STP).

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, food waste is the single most common material that goes into landfills, comprising 24 percent of landfilled solid waste nationally. Washington State's Organics Management Law of 2022, passed as House Bill 1799, supports the Washington State Legislature's 2021 Climate Commitment Act (CCA), which sets carbon emission limits and targets for reducing carbon output. To help meet the CCA emissions targets, implementation of the law will reduce methane by diverting organic materials from municipal landfills to beneficial uses. King County's 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan also identifies food waste reduction as a priority in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As required, the organics co-digestion planning report addresses questions and potential issues outlined in the Proviso, including but not limited to potential impact on entities currently providing collection and processing of organics; justification to move forward with a co-digestion capital project in lieu of other approaches to the diversion and beneficial use of food

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waste; availability and flow control of CFW; potential impact on the STP and on the Renewable Information Numbers attached to the sale of STP biomethane, and the business case for the County to invest in the SWD and WTD capital projects.

Through the analysis, DNRP concluded that it is not feasible to immediately develop a CFW pre-processing facility or co-digestion at the STP. However, the County should proceed with next steps outlined in the report to help determine the most feasible and effective approach to food waste reduction and diversion. This would include evaluating third-party organics processing developments and pursuing potential partnerships and other opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of this report, which will help inform future actions by the County to reduce the impacts of food waste, furthering the goals of the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan.

If your staff have questions, please contact Pat McLaughlin, Division Director of the Solid Waste Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4501, or Kamuron Gurol, Division Director of the Wastewater Treatment Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-263-5767.

Sincerely,



for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff
 Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Pat McLaughlin, Division Director, Solid Waste Division
Kamuron Gurol, Division Director, Wastewater Treatment Division