



## Legislation Text

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AN ORDINANCE related to at the West Point Treatment Plant, requiring a report and plan from the executive addressing issues related to staffing concerns, including staff retention, and a mechanism to provide for anonymous staff reporting of operational concerns at the West Point Treatment Plant.

### STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. In response to the February 9, 2017, system failure event at the West Point Treatment Plant, the council commissioned an independent assessment of circumstances leading to the event, and identification of appropriate responses.
2. As an element of the independent assessment, AECOM Technical Services, which was selected to perform the assessment, conducted extensive interviews with plant operations staff, and with plant and agency management. AECOM also conducted a hazardous operations workshop involving plant operations and management and agency management staff, intended to surface operational conditions that may have contributed to the February 9 event, and to conditions of concern at the plant generally. Both the staff interviews and the hazardous operations workshop were central to the identification of critical plant conditions and the development of recommendations, which will guide the agency, the council and the region in supporting the recovery from the February 9 event, and the avoidance of future such events. The council desires to institutionalize a mechanism to heighten awareness by decisionmakers of critical operational conditions that have the potential to result in system failures similar to the February 9 event.

3. Additionally, the AECOM report described the issue of staff retention at the West Point Treatment Plant. The report notes that "staff retention has been an ongoing issue...the plant is not in an easy location for commuting, and the cost of living in the surrounding area is high. WPTP has had a significant number of new hires compared to the South Plant and Brightwater Treatment Plant; ...there has been a large number of transfers from WPTP to one of the County's other treatment plants." The report notes that lack of corporate memory is a potential problem associated with lack of staff retention.

4. The wastewater treatment division currently operates a safety hotline monitored by the agency safety committee, which provides employees the opportunity to communicate concerns that are specifically related to safety but does not provide a process to identify larger operational issues.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. A. The executive shall prepare a report and recommendations addressing issues related to staff concerns at the West Point Treatment Plant, including

1. How to provide an ongoing staff reporting tool by which plant operational staff can anonymously communicate suggestions or concerns to agency management. The reporting tool may be in the form of an electronic staff hotline or suggestions box, or other means of allowing for candid and unreserved identification of conditions of concern. The reporting tool may build on the existing safety hotline or Bright Ideas, but shall also provide for reporting on broader plant operational issues; and

2. The identification of issues that result in problematic low levels of staff retention at the West Point Treatment Plant.

B. The executive shall prepare a plan, based on the report, for the implementation of the recommendations of the report, addressing both:

1. Instituting or augmenting an anonymous staff reporting tool; and

2. Means to improve staff satisfaction and retention, such as staff incentives or other strategies intended to strengthen retention outcomes at the West Point Treatment Plant.

C. The executive shall also prepare an annual summary of the suggestions and concerns received through the plan's reporting tool, as well as responsive actions taken.

SECTION 2. The report and the plan shall be transmitted to the council by February 15, 2018 and may be combined with the quarterly report required by Motion 14813. The annual summary shall be transmitted by February 15 of the year following the year the suggestions and concerns are received through the plan's reporting tool. The annual summary may be combined with the West Point Treatment Plant Independent Assessment Final Report Implementation Plan quarterly report. The report, the plan and each annual summary, shall be transmitted in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment committee and regional water quality committee, or their successors.