

RESOLUTION R-4991

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND ADOPTING AN INTEREST STATEMENT ON THE KING COUNTY WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT FOR TRANSMITTAL TO THE SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION.

WHEREAS, King County has a long-term plan to control overflows from its combined sewer systems, approved in 1999 and amended by the King County Council in 2012; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, King County entered a consent decree with the U.S Department of Justice, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology that outlines the planned actions to resolve alleged violations of the federal Clean Water Act arising from uncontrolled overflows; and

WHEREAS, through the plan and consent decree, King County has proposed a Water Quality Assessment with a commitment to limit combined sewer overflows to one per year at each outfall by 2030; and

WHEREAS, King County has estimated that the cost of the proposed Combined Sewer Overflow program to ratepayers in the King County Wastewater service area will be over \$700 million in 2010 dollars which is likely closer to \$1 billion in today's dollars, despite the fact that scientific studies have shown additional CSO projects will provide no significant improvement in water quality; and

WHEREAS, if the Water Quality Assessment, which may cost several million dollars, can provide information that could better direct the investments required under the consent decree for the highest priority water quality problems, it would be money well spent; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Water Quality Assessment needs to be paired with a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether a more integrated approach with greater stormwater control and treatment would be the best investment to achieve water quality standards by 2030;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Kirkland as follows:

Section 1. The City Council adopts the attached Interest Statement, which is incorporated by reference, recommending that the proposed King County Water Quality Assessment be paired with a cost-benefit analysis to provide data and analyses on the best investment of \$700 million to \$1 billion to achieve acceptable water quality standards by 2030.

Section 2. The City Council authorizes the Council's representative to the Sound Cities Association Public Issues Committee

to present Kirkland's Interest Statement and recommendation at its meeting on August 14, 2003.

Section 3. The City Manager is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Sound Cities Association.

Passed by majority vote of the Kirkland City Council in open meeting this 6th day of August, 2013.

Signed in authentication thereof this 6th day of August, 2013.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Mah", written over a horizontal line.

MAYOR

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keew Anderson", written over a horizontal line.
City Clerk

CITY OF KIRKLAND
KING COUNTY WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT INTEREST STATEMENT
RE: Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO)
August 6, 2013

King County has proposed a Water Quality Assessment related to its Combined Sewer Overflow [CSO] program and its associated Consent Decree requiring all CSOs to comply with the state standard of no more than one overflow per CSO per year by 2030. The CSO program is stated to be over \$700 million in 2010 dollars, and closer to \$1 billion in today's dollars – about half the cost of Brightwater. This is important to Sound Cities Association (SCA) because these high costs will be borne by all wastewater ratepayers in the King County Wastewater service area even though CSOs only exist in about 40% of Seattle. Combined sewers exist in the oldest part of Seattle, and also in portions of cities such as Tacoma, Everett, Bremerton, and a few others in Washington that date back to early development. Combined sewer overflows are essentially 90% or more stormwater. The overflows occur when the pipes and pumps are unable to handle the large combined volume of stormwater within which a very small amount of sanitary wastewater is mixed. These large volumes also impact the wastewater treatment plant. West Point accepts the combined stormwater and wastewater from the City of Seattle.

As a region we all benefit from good water quality; however, prior scientific studies starting in 1998 have shown that the water quality benefits of King County's CSO program could be negligible. And some of King County's uncontrolled CSOs already comply with the Federal CSO standard of no more than 4 system overflows per CSO per year.

The Puget Sound Partnership, tasked with the cleanup of Puget Sound and its watersheds, has prioritized stormwater in their Action Agenda as the most significant contributor to poor water quality resulting in water quality standards not being met. Yet funding for stormwater control and treatment is far short of the need. CSO reduction does result in a small amount of stormwater being treated, but at very high cost. The contrast of the need for stormwater controls and treatment compared to the investment in CSO reduction calls for a thorough analysis to determine the best investment to achieve water quality standards in Puget Sound and its watersheds within King County. To do that, the proposed WTD Water Quality Assessment needs to be paired with a parallel cost benefit analysis conducted by King County and partners.

If such studies demonstrate that a more integrated approach to achieve water quality standards results in less CSO investment and more stormwater investment, the County may pursue renegotiating the Consent Decree to allow resources to be directed to where they will provide the greatest environmental benefit. Another possible avenue for shifting funding to the highest priority could include recognizing King County Wastewater's integrated and comprehensive role in water pollution abatement as envisioned by its original state authorization statute. A third approach could include offsetting high wastewater rates for the proposed CSO program with

increases in stormwater rates to raise funding for high priority stormwater treatment as an alternative. Investigating funding methods and providing options could be a part of the cost benefit analysis study.

It is recommended that the proposed King County Water Quality Assessment be paired with a cost benefit analysis to provide data and analyses on the best investments of \$1 billion to achieve acceptable water quality standards by 2030.