



Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee

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Wastewater District*

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September 10, 2012

The Honorable Larry Phillips
Chair, Regional Water Quality Committee
King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Phillips:

As you are aware, Proviso 1 in the 2012 Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 17232, Section 116, required the Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) to prepare a report, including policy recommendations for implementation of capital improvement projects required by the regional wastewater services plan between 2012 and 2036. The County Executive transmitted the report to the King County Council May 30, 2012. The Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC) was briefed by WTD staff on this report on June 6, 2012. The Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWWPAAC) also received a briefing on the proviso report June 7, 2012.

The report itself responds to the requirements of the proviso and provides a brief overview of the regulatory requirements applicable to WTD's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). It describes contractual obligations contained in the sewage disposal agreements between King County and the local sewer utilities served by WTD. It also provides a short history of amendments and extensions to the sewage disposal agreements including current efforts to extend the term of the agreements. The report concludes with policy recommendations regarding implementation of the CIP.

There are two related CIP policy issues of concern to MWWPAAC and we ask for your consideration when responding to the motion accepting WTD's report on recommendations on prioritization when implementing capital projects through 2036.

MWWPAAC agrees with the conclusion reached in the Reclaimed Water Comprehensive Plan 2012 that WTD should not expand reclaimed water projects outside their existing service area. However, we disagree with the conclusion that WTD should continue building out projects within the existing service area without using cost-effectiveness as a criterion. Cost effectiveness should govern all CIP actions in the reclaimed water program, including any activities within the existing service area.

As indicated in the Executive's submitted Policy Recommendations for Capital Improvement Projects required by the RWSP (2012 through 2036), WTD states the recommended policies guiding implementation of its capital improvement program. One of these is the following:

*Furthering WTD's mission to protect public health and enhance the environment by treating and **reclaiming water**, recycling solids, and generating energy.*

Our concern is that **reclaiming water is not the mission** of the organization. In fact MWPAAC advocates that the mission of WTD is very simple, that is:

To ensure continued efficient operation and reliability of existing wastewater conveyance and treatment facilities to meet the current and future needs of the regional wastewater system.

This criteria to guide capital development should be limited to actions that further the primary mission, not other programs or lines of business that are not central to that mission. Reclaimed water is a non-compulsory program that should be governed by cost-effectiveness, not given priority in establishing the long term capital needs for the Wastewater Treatment Utility.

We urge you to include language in your motion to remove reclaiming water as a priority used in implementing the RWSP CIP between 2012 and 2036. To accomplish this MWPAAC recommends the following revisions be made to the recommended policies.

Amend the first sentence on page 5 of the proviso report as follows:

“Capital improvement projects should implement WTD's mission to protect public health and enhance the environment. Projects should receive a higher priority for implementation if the purpose of the project is to...”

Then the last bullet on page 5 of the report which refers to WTD's mission should be deleted.

MWPAAC supports the adoption of the policies with these recommended changes. MWPAAC appreciates the opportunity to provide our recommendations regarding policy to the Regional Water Quality Committee.

Sincerely,



Scott Thomasson
MWPAAC Chair

cc: The Honorable Dow Constantine, Executive, King County
Regional Water Quality Committee Members
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Pam Elardo, P.E., Director, Wastewater Treatment Division, DNRP