



King County

Shannon Braddock

King County Executive

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www.kingcounty.gov

June 13, 2025

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

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that, if enacted, would provide King County with the authority to purchase the Bio Energy Washington (BEW) landfill gas processing plant located at Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF) in Maple Valley. The purchase also settles the federal litigation between King County and BEW, the plant operator, currently pending in United States District Court, Western District of Washington, Case No. 2:23-cv-00542-LK.

When waste is buried in the landfill, it decomposes and generates landfill gas, consisting primarily of carbon dioxide and methane, both of which are potent greenhouse gases. In February 2008, the Solid Waste Division (SWD) entered an agreement with BEW to develop a landfill gas processing plant on land leased from King County at CHRLF to convert landfill gas into renewable energy.

The landfill gas processing plant operated at CHRLF from October 2010 until August 2023. In April 2023, BEW filed suit against King County in U.S. District Court in the Western District of Washington. King County thereafter countersued. In February 2025, King County and BEW reached a settlement agreement that included provisions for the County to purchase the landfill gas processing plant for \$70 million and pay a \$5 million settlement for litigation.

As part of this authorization, Council action is needed on a proposed budget appropriation Ordinance and proposed bond issuance Ordinance. A proposed supplemental budget appropriation Ordinance is transmitted simultaneously and separately from this package.

Operating the landfill gas processing plant has significant environmental benefits. In 2021, CHRLF generated an average of about 6,500 standard cubic feet per minute of landfill gas.

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When processed at the processing plant, landfill gas is converted into pipeline-quality biogas, producing the energy needed to meet the natural gas needs of over 17,500 homes in King County. Converting landfill gas into renewable energy means that an equal amount of non-renewable energy – fossil fuels like natural gas, coal, or oil – does not need to be consumed. This reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about 85,000 metric tons per year.

The plant also provides financial benefits for SWD and the ratepayers of King County. Selling biogas produced by the landfill gas processing plant is anticipated to be revenue positive beginning in the 2026-2027 biennium. During that time, SWD anticipates a net revenue of \$5 million from operating the plant.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. Acquiring and operating the renewable natural gas plant will provide environmental and financial benefits to the ratepayers of King County.

If your staff have questions, please contact Rebecca Singer, Division Director of the Solid Waste Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-263-2244.

Sincerely,



for

Shannon Braddock
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council
 Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council
Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Stephanie Pure, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Rebecca Singer, Division Director, Solid Waste Division, DNRP