

**Executive Girmay Zahilay**

Chinook Building, CNK-EX-0800
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104-2391

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Sarah Perry
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Perry:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, update the County's methodology for calculating the capacity charge for new sewer connections to align with current industry standards. Approval of this proposed legislation will ensure the capacity charge continues to implement the principle of growth pays for growth consistent with King County Code 28.86.160 Financial Policy-15 while providing a transparent, simpler calculation for administrative purposes and easier to understand for customers.

In 1990, new connections to sewer began paying a capacity charge to fund the capital infrastructure necessary to handle added flow coming into King County's regional wastewater treatment system from growth in the region. The current methodology used to calculate the capacity charge has been in place since the adoption of the Regional Wastewater Services Plan (RWSP) (Ordinance 13680) in 1999.

In 2016, the King County Auditor reviewed the capacity charge program and recommended the charge should be updated to a simpler, more transparent calculation. The Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) began the process to update the RWSP in 2019, including Financial Policy-15. This planning effort was paused to consider and respond to feedback on the process. In 2024, DNRP reinitiated the planning effort known now as the RWSP update. In the interim, DNRP engaged a consultant, Raftelis, to develop the proposed capacity charge methodology to respond to the Auditor's recommendations and align with current industry standards for connection charges.

The proposed methodology for calculating the capacity charge for new sewer connections in the proposed legislation ensures that each new or expanded connection pays an equitable share of the cost of the system, as authorized in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 35.58.570. The capacity charge inputs and the calculation are to be updated at least every five years or when substantial system wastewater capacity investments are completed or updated.

DNRP sought input from the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee, an advisory committee consisting of representatives from local sewer agencies served by King County's regional

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wastewater system, during the consultant study and the resulting consultant recommendation for an updated methodology.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation will help to modernize the capacity charge methodology, making it easier to calculate and more transparent for King County residents.

If your staff have questions, please contact Kamuron Gurol, Division Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-263-5767.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Girmay Zahilay". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

for

Girmay Zahilay
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, Office of the Executive
Jasmin Weaver, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Sierra Howlett Browne, Government Relations Director, Office of the Executive
Garrett Holbrook, Council Relations Manager, Office of the Executive
John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks