

VIA EMAIL (PDF) TO KCEXEC@KINGCOUNTY.GOV

January 05, 2021

Dow Constantine
King County Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 5th Ave. Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Regional Conveyance Infrastructure – Sammamish Plateau Diversion

Dear Executive Constantine,

I am writing on behalf of Sammamish Plateau Water to express our concern with the County's unilateral decision to deprioritize long-planned improvements to regional sewer conveyance infrastructure and the impact of that decision on our ability to serve the rapid growth of the City of Sammamish and meet the expectations of the Growth Management Act.

As the water and sewer provider for the majority of the City of Sammamish, and approximately one third of the City of Issaquah, Sammamish Plateau Water contracts with King County for wastewater treatment to support the urbanization of our service area. For more than 50 years, the District relied upon the planned construction of a new regional transmission line included in the King County Regional Wastewater Services Plan, which would convey the sewerage from the northern portion of our service area. This new transmission line has been a critical component of our long-term planning and is central to our District Wastewater Comprehensive Plan to meet the needs of our growing service area.

In 2013, our District advised County staff of the urgent need to construct this long-planned project referred to by the County as the Sammamish Plateau Diversion (SPD). The timing for this project was authorized due to the rapid development and growth in the City of Sammamish and the District was regularly assured by the County that the SPD had been programmed and funded.

In 2018, much to our dismay, the District discovered that construction of the SPD project would now be postponed for nearly 20 years, as it has been reclassified from "high priority" to "low priority." It is our understanding that the funds allocated for the SPD project were diverted in order to fund repairs to the County's West Point Treatment Plant. This action was taken with no prior consultation with the District, nor with any opportunity for the District to express our concerns, yet it severely undermines our ability to serve our rapidly growing customer base.

In lieu of funding and constructing the SPD, the County requested that the District complete an “interim improvement evaluation,” to consider improvements to the District’s local system that would alleviate some of the immediate consequences of the construction delay. This independent evaluation found there are no simple solutions to meet the District’s regional sewage conveyance needs. As expected, until the completion of the SPD, options are costly and time consuming to implement.

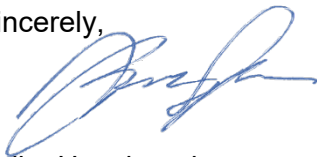
For a number of years, the District has alerted the County that without the SPD, District facilities would soon reach capacity. We have now reached that point. Our sewage conveyance needs are now exceeding the capacity limitations that were identified in 2015.

In recognition of these facts and the impact of this unilateral decision, the County staff recently informed us they are recommending accelerating the construction schedule for the SPD. However, without any binding assurances from the County, the District may be forced to consider drastic measures to offset the delay of the SPD.

I am reaching out to seek the support of County decision-makers for a binding commitment to authorize and fund both short and long-term improvements to meet the District’s regional conveyance needs. Without such commitments, the District will be unable to sustain current and planned development in Sammamish and may be forced to implement a moratorium on sewer connections in affected portions of the District. We are unaware of any other agencies served by the County that have been put in such a position due to the lack of regional sewer conveyance infrastructure.

I am hopeful we can work together to form a timely resolution of this issue. Please feel free to contact me at ryika.hooshangi@spwater.org.

Sincerely,



Ryika Hooshangi
Board President

cc: King County Councilmembers

Mark Isaacson, Division Director, King County Wastewater Treatment Division

Christie True, Department Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Karen Moran, Mayor, City of Sammamish

Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor, City of Issaquah

Northeast Sammamish Sewer and Water District