

MOTION NO. **9681**

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A MOTION relating to the recommendations of the Regional Needs Assessment for surface water management; requesting actions by the Regional Water Quality Committee; providing regional guidance for service provision; and calling for the creation of watershed forums and development of regional approaches to providing flood protection, preserving water quality and enhancing fish habitat.

WHEREAS, the King County council directed the county executive through Motion 9164 to carry out the Regional Needs Assessment (RNA) for surface water management in cooperation with the City of Seattle and the suburban cities, and

WHEREAS, the Suburban Cities Association, City of Seattle, and King County have worked collaboratively since May of 1994 to identify the critical surface water issues facing the region, and have developed recommendations presented in a report titled Report and Recommendations: Regional Needs Assessment for Surface Water Management, King County, Washington (RNA Report), dated July 20, 1995, and

WHEREAS, the RNA Report found that to move forward in surface water decision-making and funding in this region, all affected interests and jurisdictions need to be included, and

WHEREAS, while economic and population growth in our region have brought prosperity and opportunity for many generations, development of our lands over the past decades has changed the natural functioning of our landscape, creating flooding, natural resource and environmental problems that must be addressed to maintain a high quality of life, and

WHEREAS, the RNA Report found surface water management financial needs exceed available resources, and the region lacks mechanisms to set priorities to guide existing funds toward the most critical needs, and

WHEREAS, the cities and county have invested millions of dollars to solve drainage problems, \$45 million is spent annually by the cities and county to maintain local drainage systems, and studies by the cities and the county have identified the need for over \$450 million in capital investment over the next twenty years to solve critical drainage system problems, and

1           WHEREAS, more than 10 percent of King County is flooded periodically by major  
2 rivers, threatening properties in 16 cities and substantial unincorporated areas, and the  
3 county has identified an additional \$80 million need for capital projects to solve high  
4 priority river flooding problems affecting homes, businesses, and important public  
5 facilities, and

6           WHEREAS, even with substantial changes to the land from development, there are  
7 still significant fish runs in King County as indicated by the fact that more than 40,000  
8 salmon returned to Bear Creek in 1994, more than 20 percent of the Snohomish wild  
9 coho are produced in Griffin Creek in the Snoqualmie Valley, and the Cedar River has  
10 historically supported the largest sockeye run in the lower 48 states, and

11           WHEREAS, local, state, federal, and tribal governments all have responsibility for  
12 management of fish and water resources, and a multitude of government agencies and  
13 processes have evolved, resulting in a complex management system, and

14           WHEREAS, some of the most successful programs solving surface water  
15 management issues have been community-based efforts with partnerships between citizens  
16 and government on a watershed level, and

17           WHEREAS, many streams and rivers in the county cross jurisdictional boundaries  
18 and most problems require a watershed focus to be solved, and

19           WHEREAS, the King County council's Regional Water Quality Committee  
20 (RWQC), comprised of representatives from suburban cities, Seattle, King County, and  
21 sewer districts, has considered the RNA Report and endorsed this motion;

22           NOW THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the council of King County:

23           The King County council adopts A through E as guiding policies for surface water  
24 management countywide and endorses the actions in items F through J below:

25           A. Drainage and conveyance services are the responsibility of each individual  
26 jurisdiction, but where drainage crosses jurisdictional boundaries or impacts downstream  
27 flows, coordination must occur between the affected jurisdictions. Fish habitat, water  
28 quality, and river flooding issues generally need to be coordinated across jurisdictional  
29 lines to successfully set priorities and determine who should carry out solutions.

30           B. Watersheds are the appropriate geographic unit to organize collaborative  
31 approaches to major surface water issues and to bring together citizens, elected officials,  
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1 officials, representatives of tribal, state, and federal governments, and other stakeholders.  
2 The county shall be divided into six watersheds for management of surface water as  
3 delineated on the map attached as Exhibit A. The six watersheds shall be the Cedar  
4 River\Lake Washington, Green\Duwamish River, Lake Sammamish\Sammamish River,  
5 Puget Sound Drainages, Snoqualmie\Skykomish Rivers, and White River.

6 C. Watershed forums shall be created in the Cedar River\Lake Washington,  
7 Green\Duwamish River, Lake Sammamish\Sammamish River, and Snoqualmie\  
8 Skykomish River watersheds. The forums are not intended as a new government  
9 structure but a place to bring together key parties to collaboratively address issues in the  
10 watershed. The watershed forums should: set goals and strategies for surface water  
11 management issues in the watershed, encompassing fish habitat, water quality, and  
12 flooding; sort out overlaps and conflicts; develop funding sources for priority projects and  
13 to continue forum coordination; encourage interlocal agreements between local  
14 jurisdictions; seek technical assistance and funding from external sources; and share  
15 information with other watersheds. The forums should be initiated by local government  
16 elected officials from each of the jurisdictions in the watershed, and should provide  
17 avenues for participation of all affected interests in the watershed.

18 D. The RWQC will give general guidance and serve as the regional focal point  
19 for establishing cross-watershed priorities and policies and addressing issues which cross  
20 watershed boundaries or affect all watersheds.

21 E. Protection of life and property from major river floods and restoration of fish  
22 habitat are regional issues that require additional efforts and funding at the countywide  
23 and/or watershed levels.

24 F. Discussion of the RNA recommendations has raised a number of issues  
25 related to funding of regional and watershed flood control and fish habitat protection and  
26 restoration. The RWQC is requested to direct further research of the issues and  
27 development by January 1996 of a recommendation for funding both countywide and  
28 watershed efforts related to major river flood control and fish habitat protection and  
29 restoration.

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1           G. The following jurisdictions are encouraged to act as temporary watershed  
2 forum conveners and call a meeting, no later than January 30, 1996, of elected officials  
3 representing each local government in the watershed:

- 4           1) Tukwila: Green\Duwamish River
- 5           2) Renton: Cedar River\Lake Washington
- 6           3) Redmond: Lake Sammamish
- 7           4) King County: Snoqualmie\Skykomish Rivers

8 In the White and Puget Sound Watersheds, the jurisdictions should continue to investigate  
9 the need for a forum. These jurisdictions are encouraged to work together on a technical  
10 level to share information and look for effective solutions to common problems. If the  
11 affected jurisdictions determine the need for a forum, they may bring the proposal to the  
12 RWQC.

13           H. Initiation of the watershed forums will require staff and time commitments  
14 from each jurisdiction to be successful. To assist in the start-up of the forums, for three  
15 years (beginning in 1996), the county will provide a watershed coordinator and technical  
16 assistance for each of the four watersheds. The coordinators will be selected with  
17 participation by the cities and will work directly for the forums. Cities are encouraged to  
18 contribute staff time and expertise to support the watershed forums and participate in  
19 sub-watershed work groups.

20           I. By March 1998, an evaluation shall be completed by each forum to determine  
21 if watersheds issues are successfully being addressed and whether the forum should  
22 continue and how it should be funded.

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J. Watershed forums should establish their own work plans based on the needs identified for the watershed. However, to establish a common base for the forums, the RWQC shall, by December 1995, recommend principles and approaches to assist in the formation of the forums.

PASSED by a vote of 12 to 0 this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1995.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Kent Pullen  
Chair

ATTEST:

Gerald A. Peterson  
Clerk of the Council

Attachment:

A. Map of Watersheds of King County

# The Watersheds of King County

## Exhibit A

