



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**March 14, 2017**

**Motion 14826**

**Proposed No. 2017-0115.2**

**Sponsors Kohl-Welles, Lambert and  
Dembowski**

1           A MOTION providing for a report on causes, consequences  
2           and appropriate responses to the West Point Treatment  
3           Plant February 2017 emergency bypass discharge event.

4           WHEREAS, the West Point Wastewater Treatment Plant serves as the key  
5           wastewater treatment facility for a significant portion of the King County wastewater  
6           system, and

7           WHEREAS, the plant experienced a major system failure in the early morning of  
8           February 9, 2017, with the result that the plant was inundated by major internal flooding  
9           causing the release of high volumes of untreated, combined flows of wastewater and  
10          stormwater directly into the Puget Sound through the plant's emergency bypass outfall  
11          and substantial damage to plant equipment and facilities ("the event"), and

12          WHEREAS, the secondary treatment process at the plant currently remains  
13          suspended, resulting in the continuation of minimally treated wastewater and stormwater  
14          discharging into the Puget Sound, and

15          WHEREAS, the wastewater treatment division has indicated that there have been  
16          previous occasions when effluent discharge pump functions were interrupted, requiring  
17          crews to quickly restore pumping functionality, and that after each such an occasion, the  
18          wastewater treatment division performed event evaluations as to the causes and response  
19          to the pump function interruption, and

20 WHEREAS, the council has responsibility for monitoring operations, reviewing  
21 and approving planning, defining policy, adopting operating and capital expenditures and  
22 reviewing and establishing rates and fees for the wastewater treatment system, and

23 WHEREAS, the public needs to know the causes of the event and how it can be  
24 avoided in the future, and

25 WHEREAS, meeting the council's responsibility and the public's need, in the  
26 context of the event, requires a formal tool to provide a clear assessment as to causes,  
27 facility damage, full recovery timeline, appropriate preventive systems and lessons  
28 learned, and

29 WHEREAS, providing an independent expert review of these issues will result in  
30 an unbiased evaluation that will provide a substantial benefit to the wastewater treatment  
31 system including future operational and capital decisions;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

33 A.1. The council chair is requested to direct the chief of staff to initiate an  
34 expedited process to procure a qualified contractor to prepare a report addressing and  
35 evaluating the causes of the event, as well as providing recommendations for how a  
36 similar event can be avoided in the future and what responses could have been taken to  
37 avert the event. Authorization to contract will be by future council motion. The  
38 wastewater treatment division shall work closely with and provide information as  
39 requested by the consultant to accomplish the purposes of the report.

40 2. The report should include, but not be limited to:

41 a. a description of the flooding of the plant that occurred during the event,  
42 including flooding volume, sources, facility damage, threats to staff safety, and  
43 implications for facility operations and design;

44 b. an evaluation of the causes or contributing factors to the event, including  
45 but not limited to the weather, volumes of the combined flows of wastewater and  
46 stormwater, failures and causes of such failures of equipment or systems, including but  
47 not limited to electrical, any wastewater treatment division operational protocol,  
48 procedure or practice, and any staff training, decisions and actions of the on-site crew  
49 during or leading up to the event;

50 c. a description and evaluation of the wastewater treatment division's  
51 immediate and subsequent responses to the event, including communications after the  
52 event to stakeholders and the public and internal reporting and tracking processes;

53 d. an evaluation of how the flooding of the plant could have been averted;

54 e. an evaluation of the plant's power systems, both leading to the plant, and  
55 within the plant, with any recommendations for opportunities to strengthen system  
56 redundancy and avoid power disruptions or abnormalities that may require emergency  
57 crew response;

58 f. a description of the environmental impacts from the discharge of untreated  
59 or minimally treated wastewater and stormwater, including impacts related to wastewater  
60 bacteria, as well as metals and other toxins, associated with the event;

61 g. a description of the public health impacts resulting from the event;

62 h. recommendations of appropriate preventive approaches, strategies, practices  
63 or systems to avoid recurrence of extended suspensions of full operation of the

64 wastewater treatment at the plant, consistent with the plant's National Pollutant Discharge  
65 Elimination System ("NPDES") permit and state and federal laws;

66 i. an evaluation of methods to relieve flow volumes at the plant during future  
67 heavy storm periods, including, but not limited to, flow diversion, infiltration/inflow  
68 control, increased system storage or green stormwater infrastructure opportunities, or any  
69 other appropriate means;

70 j. a description and an evaluation of the wastewater treatment division's  
71 lessons learned from the event that will help avoid future extended suspension of full  
72 operation of the wastewater treatment at the plant, consistent with the plant's NPDES  
73 permit and state and federal laws;

74 k. a review of prior occasions at the plant involving effluent discharge pump  
75 shutdowns or operational interruptions over the past three years, describing the cause of  
76 each event, the outcome, whether any facility damages resulted, whether pump  
77 replacement or repair was required and whether corrective action was taken to avoid  
78 future such events; and

79 l. any other findings or analysis the consultant deems relevant or necessary for  
80 the council and the public to understand the causes and effectiveness of the response to  
81 the event and how to prevent a similar event in the future.

82 3. The consultant should deliver its final report simultaneously to the council  
83 and the executive by July 1, 2017, or at other date mutually agreeable between the  
84 council chief of staff and the contractor. The consultant shall deliver the report to the  
85 council in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council,  
86 who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the

87 council chief of staff and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment  
88 committee and regional water quality committee, or its successor. The council may  
89 require interim reports on a periodic basis.

90 4. The wastewater treatment division shall work closely with the consultant by  
91 providing any and all assistance and access to information as requested by the consultant  
92 in furtherance of its review. The wastewater treatment division also shall participate in  
93 an exit meeting with the consultant to address the findings and recommendations of the

94 report. The council by subsequent council action shall provide for reporting on the  
95 implementation of recommendations of the consultant.

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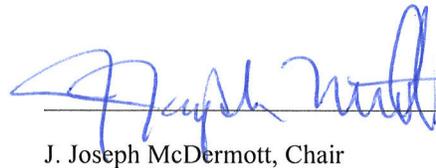
Motion 14826 was introduced on 3/13/2017 and passed as amended by the  
Metropolitan King County Council on 3/13/2017, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn,  
Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Upthegrove, Ms. Kohl-Welles  
and Ms. Balducci

No: 0

Excused: 0

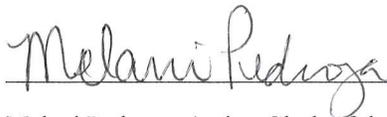
KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



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J. Joseph McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:



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Melani Pedroza, Acting Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** None