



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**Motion 16434**

**Proposed No.** 2023-0264.2

**Sponsors** Kohl-Welles and Balducci

1                   A MOTION concerning contaminants of emerging concern  
2                   in wastewater effluent and directing next steps to limit their  
3                   impact.

4                   WHEREAS, the county's regional wastewater system protects human health and  
5 the environment by collecting and treating wastewater while recycling valuable resources  
6 for the Puget Sound region, and

7                   WHEREAS, contaminants of emerging concern are chemicals and toxins that  
8 have the potential to impact human health and the environment, and

9                   WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities are the recipients of contaminants of  
10 emerging concern in wastewater discharged from homes and businesses, and

11                   WHEREAS, there are many chemicals used in commerce and contaminants of  
12 emerging concern are found in common consumer products, such as pharmaceuticals and  
13 personal care products, which are direct exposure points impacting human health, and

14                   WHEREAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances chemicals are a group of  
15 chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains,  
16 grease, and water, and

17                   WHEREAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a group of chemicals  
18 commonly referred to as PFAS, and

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19 WHEREAS, PFAS are a group of chemicals that are extremely resistant to  
20 complete breakdown in people and the environment are one concerning type of  
21 contaminants of emerging concern, and

22 WHEREAS, some PFAS may impair immune function, cause kidney and  
23 testicular cancers in people, and harm aquatic life, birds, and mammals , and

24 WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities are also recipients of PFAS and  
25 contaminants of emerging concern, and traditional wastewater treatment or water  
26 treatment processes are not designed to remove them, and

27 WHEREAS, source control is a cost-effective method for limiting or eliminating  
28 PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern in wastewater, and

29 WHEREAS, the King County council in response to concerns about ongoing  
30 health outcomes of southern resident orcas in Puget Sound waters added a proviso to the  
31 2021-2022 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 19210, requesting a report on toxics in  
32 King County wastewater effluent and evaluating the presence of toxics, and

33 WHEREAS, the county's wastewater treatment division of the department of  
34 natural resources and parks briefed the regional water quality committee on February 1,  
35 2023, and the committee of the whole on June 21, 2023 on the report evaluating the  
36 presence of toxics in the effluent of King County's wastewater treatment plants and the  
37 potential impacts of PFAS, and

38 WHEREAS, the research team that briefed the regional water quality committee  
39 and committee of the whole concluded that wastewater treatment plants are an ongoing  
40 pathway for persistent chemicals into Puget Sound, and

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41 WHEREAS, researchers also concluded that such long-lasting chemicals, such as  
42 PCBs and PFAS, in King County's treated effluent discharges may accumulate in  
43 chinook salmon and could contribute to health effects in southern resident orcas, and

44 WHEREAS, contaminants of emerging concern represent a paramount challenge  
45 for King County and all of Washington with far-reaching consequences that put our  
46 people, our economy, and our environment at risk, and

47 WHEREAS, King County is committed to protecting the health of our residents  
48 and Puget Sound;

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

50 A. King County seeks to identify, prioritize, reduce, and control sources,  
51 exposures, and risk from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") and contaminants  
52 of concern to people and the environment in King County. To accomplish these goals,  
53 the county's wastewater treatment division of the department of natural resources and  
54 parks is requested to take the following actions:

55 1. Seek operational, capital, or programmatic changes that may address PFAS,  
56 in the context of competing priorities, and assessing opportunities for collaborative  
57 actions that support our community and external partners;

58 2. Determine the most significant PFAS sources, pathways and exposures in  
59 King County, including undertaking voluntary sampling;

60 3. Support source control measures as the most effective and equitable solution,  
61 including implementation of the Safer Products for Washington program;

62 4. Inform and support state and federal PFAS chemical action plans;

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63           5. Comment and engage in the development of regulations and legislation  
64 related to PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern;

65           6. Seek funding for projects and research to mitigate PFAS and contaminants of  
66 emerging concern in the region, and whenever possible seek producer responsibility for  
67 cleanup rather than burdening ratepayers and the public with treatment and cleanup costs;

68           7. Coordinate and share information and strategy with other jurisdictions in  
69 Washington, particularly King County's local sewer agency partners served by the  
70 regional wastewater system;

71           8. Research wastewater treatment technologies to address and reduce PFAS and  
72 contaminants of concern in effluent and biosolids for consideration and implementation,  
73 with special consideration for how technologies address the final fate and destruction of  
74 those chemicals; and

75           9. Support actions to educate residents and businesses about how they can  
76 reduce the use of PFAS and contaminants of concern in homes and businesses, reducing  
77 exposure to those chemicals.

78           B. The department of natural resources and parks shall be available to brief the  
79 transportation, environment and economy committee and the regional water quality  
80 committee in 2024 and as requested by the council, on its efforts to reduce and control  
81 PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern. Beginning with the 2025 sewer rate  
82 forecast, the wastewater treatment division shall include in its technical memorandum  
83 submitted with the annual sewer rate ordinance a section identifying the cost of activities

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- 84 it has undertaken and plans to undertake to address contaminants of emerging concern,  
85 including PFAS.

Motion 16434 was introduced on 7/25/2023 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 10/3/2023, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Balducci, Dembowski, Dunn, Kohl-Welles, Perry, McDermott, Upthegrove, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:



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Dave Upthegrove, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:



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Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** None

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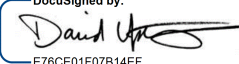
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Dave Upthegrove  
dave.upthegrove@kingcounty.gov  
Chair  
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**Signature**

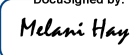
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Melani Hay  
melani.hay@kingcounty.gov  
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