



Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee

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February 2, 2010

Christie True, Director
King County Wastewater Treatment Division
MS: KSC-NR-0501
201 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

SUBJECT: Capacity Charge Reporting

Dear Ms. True:

At your request, the Advisory Subcommittee on Sewage Disposal Agreements (SDA) of the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAAC) reviewed the issue of capacity charge reporting by the local sewer agencies to determine if there is a more efficient method of reporting new connections to the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD). Over the years, some inconsistencies have arisen in how each local sewer agency reports a new connection in order for WTD to begin billing the capacity charge.

Background

When there is a new connection to the local sewer system, the customer completes either a Residential or Non-residential Sewer Use Certification Sewage Treatment Capacity Charge Form. The customer gets a copy of the completed form, the local sewer agency retains a copy and sends a third copy to WTD. Some local sewer agencies send capacity charge reporting forms to WTD within the same month the new connection occurs while other agencies take longer to report. WTD has requested that new connections be reported within forty-five days of connection, but not all local agencies do so. There should be some consistent timeframe during which local sewer agencies will report all new connections to WTD.

In addition to delays in reporting, there are also instances where a connection is "missed" and not reported to WTD until months or years later. To ensure that all new connections are reported, WTD had requested, in the past, that local sewer agencies complete a capacity charge quarterly report with a list of all new accounts. The purpose of the quarterly report was to ensure the local agencies had some internal cross-check to determine whether all new connections were being timely reported to WTD. Some agencies did not submit a quarterly report. Other agencies simply submitted a list of connections without cross-checking to see if there was a missed connection.

Overall, the capacity charge quarterly report did not prove effective in reducing the number of missed connections. Therefore, WTD no longer requests submittal of this report. Instead, WTD Capacity Charge Program staff has encouraged the local agencies to establish some internal process or cross check to ensure that all new connections have been reported timely to WTD. These processes or cross-checks vary among the local agencies. For example, some agencies compare their list of new connections against a list of permittees from the building department and, at least, one agency compares its list of water meter connections against a list of new sewer accounts.

Issues

- Within what timeframe should a local sewer agency report a new connection to WTD for purposes of capacity charge reporting?
- What internal process should the local sewer agencies use to verify all new connections have been reported to WTD in a timely manner?

Recommendations

- In order to allow WTD to bill, in a timely manner, a new customer for the capacity charge, MWPAAC recommends that a local agency report any new sewer connection to WTD within 45 days after the final inspection of a side sewer connection.
- After discussions with WTD's Capacity Charge Program staff, MWPAAC recommends that WTD send each local agency a quarterly report listing connections reported for the agency during the quarter. Each local agency will then verify the list and contact WTD if there are any missed connections. (During SDA's discussions, it became clear that local agencies use different internal processes to determine if they have reported all new connections to WTD. Also, the subcommittee noted there was not a method for the local agencies to verify that all new connections reported to WTD had in fact been set up for billing.)

MWPAAC suggests that the above recommendations be communicated in a joint letter from MWPAAC and WTD to the local sewer agencies. Compliance with these recommendations should make capacity charge billing more efficient. Should WTD implement these recommendations, MWPAAC requests that WTD brief SDA in 2010 on implementation. If these recommendations do not result in improved reporting of new connections, MWPAAC may wish to review the issue again.

Sincerely,



Scott Thomasson
Chair

cc: MWPAAC Members