

**NOTE 12 – LANDFILL CLOSURE AND POST-CLOSURE CARE COSTS**

King County is legally responsible for closure and post-closure care costs associated with the County's solid waste landfills. Estimated costs of closure and post-closure care are recognized as the remaining estimated capacity is filled. These amounts are based on what it would cost to perform all closure and post-closure care in current dollars. Actual cost may be different due to inflation, changes in technology, or changes in regulations.

State and federal laws and regulations require King County to place a final cover on its Cedar Hills Landfill site when the County stops accepting waste at this location. Certain maintenance and monitoring functions are also required at the sites for 30 years following closure. Enumclaw, Hobart, Duvall, Vashon, and Cedar Falls landfills have been covered. Puyallup, Houghton, Bow Lake, and First Northeast are custodial landfills which were covered 30 or more years ago and are no longer subject to these laws and regulations.

Although closure and post-closure care costs will be paid only near or after the date that the landfills stop accepting waste, the County reports a portion of these costs as an operating expense in each period. The expense is based on landfill capacity used as of each year-end. The \$112.5 million reported as landfill closure and post-closure care liability as of December 31, 2008, represents the cumulative percentage reported based on the amount that each of the landfills has been filled to date as follows (dollars in thousands):

| <u>Landfill</u> | <u>Percent Filled</u> | <u>Estimated Liability</u> | <u>Estimated Remaining Liability</u> | <u>Estimated Year of Closure</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cedar Hills     | 85%                   | \$71,924                   | \$16,157                             | 2015                             |
| Covered         | 100%                  | 31,647                     | -                                    | closed                           |
| Custodial       | 100%                  | 8,930                      | -                                    | closed                           |

The County is required by state and federal laws and regulations to make annual contributions to a reserve fund to finance closure and post-closure care. The County is in compliance with these requirements. As of December 31, 2008, cash and cash equivalents of \$39.9 million were held in the Landfill Reserve Fund. Cash and cash equivalents of \$18.6 million were held in the Landfill Post-closure Maintenance Fund, a fund designated for these purposes.

The County expects that future cost increases resulting from inflation will be covered by the interest income earned on these annual contributions. However, if interest earnings are inadequate, or additional post-closure care requirements are determined (due to changes in technology or regulations), the County may need to increase future user fees or tax revenues.

The County also established the Environmental Reserve Fund for future investigation and possible remediation of custodial landfills. Landfill investigations and foreseeable remediation efforts are complete; therefore there is no liability recorded for custodial landfills.