



**Signature Report**

**April 27, 2001**

**Motion 11156**

**Proposed No.** 2001-0149.2

**Sponsors** Pullen, Nickels and Phillips

1           A MOTION endorsing the wastewater program's  
2           productivity initiative for the purpose of saving ratepayers  
3           money while ensuring continuing high-quality operation of  
4           the county's wastewater utility.

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                  WHEREAS, King County is committed to working with its  
8           employees and labor unions to identify the most efficient manner to successfully deliver  
9           services to its customers and clients, and

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                  WHEREAS, King County is responsible for providing wastewater conveyance  
11           and treatment services in the region and owns and operates certain wastewater treatment  
12           facilities, and

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                  WHEREAS, the county's wastewater program (WWP), a program of certain  
14           sections from within the wastewater treatment division and water and land resources  
15           division of the department of natural resources, providing of design/construction,  
16           maintenance and operations, planning, finance and administration, technology  
17           assessment, environmental laboratory, and industrial waste program services, has the

18 responsibility to manage and directly operate the wastewater conveyance and treatment  
19 system, and

20 WHEREAS, the WWP seeks to respond to increasing public demand for  
21 demonstration that sewer rates paid for wastewater conveyance and treatment services are  
22 being held as low as possible, and

23 WHEREAS, in the past the WWP gainsharing program successfully identified  
24 savings and operational efficiencies in the WWP by offering incentives to eligible  
25 employees to save money, and

26 WHEREAS, in 1999 the WWP developed a vision of becoming the best public  
27 wastewater program in the nation in five years, with a balanced combination of the best  
28 service, best employer, best employees, and cost effectiveness, and to be competitive  
29 with the best of the private service providers in ten years, and

30 WHEREAS, the goals of this vision are to use private sector models to improve  
31 management of a public sector utility, improve cost efficiencies; provide savings to the  
32 public; define target budgets and accountability measures for meeting those targets;  
33 continue working collaboratively with labor; and allow employees to be creative in  
34 meeting the vision of becoming the best wastewater program, and

35 WHEREAS, in accordance with those goals, the WWP has developed a ten-year  
36 productivity initiative, described in Attachments A and B to this motion, in partnership  
37 with labor, management and employees, to apply certain business practices to the  
38 operation of a public utility, and

39           WHEREAS, the WWP intends to perform all of the functions that it has  
40           historically performed and comply with all applicable local, state and federal regulations  
41           as described in Attachment C to this motion, and

42           WHEREAS, the WWP will implement the productivity initiative in a manner that  
43           does not lower or compromise effluent quality or employee safety, and

44           WHEREAS, one of the goals of the productivity initiative is to reduce the cost of  
45           managing, operating and maintaining wastewater treatment system, and

46           WHEREAS, the productivity initiative will be implemented consistent with  
47           relevant negotiated labor agreements, and

48           WHEREAS, cost savings generated through the productivity initiative are to be  
49           achieved without the use of involuntary layoffs, and

50           WHEREAS, the productivity initiative establishes the potential for both cost  
51           savings for the WWP and productivity incentives for the WWP employees, and

52           WHEREAS, the productivity initiative is intended to serve as a model for similar  
53           initiatives for other King County programs and services;

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

- 55           1. The county executive is hereby authorized to proceed with a productivity  
56           initiative for the WWP that would include implementing business plans, meeting annual  
57           budget targets, creating an incentive fund, continuing to work collaboratively with labor,  
58           developing service agreements with county support agencies, and modifying certain  
59           internal WWP administrative policies.

**Motion 11156**

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60           2. King County’s wastewater treatment system will continue to be maintained as  
61 a public facility and will be managed and operated by public employees for so long as the  
62 productivity initiative is in effect.

63           3. The county executive is requested to submit for council consideration certain  
64 amendments to county ordinances and code necessary to further the goals of the  
65 productivity initiative, so that the WWP may operate more efficiently.

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Motion 11156 was introduced on 2/26/01 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 4/9/01, by the following vote:

Yes: 11 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Miller, Ms. Fimia, Mr. Phillips, Mr. McKenna, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Nickels, Mr. Pullen, Ms. Hague, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Irons  
No: 0  
Excused: 2 - Mr. Pelz and Mr. Gossett

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

/s/

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Pete von Reichbauer, Chair

ATTEST:

/s/

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Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments**       A. Background Information, B. Productivity Initiative Pilot Program Plan, C. Appendices

