City of Tacoma **City Council Action Memorandum**

TO: **Hyun Kim, City Manager**
FROM: **Brandi Lubliner, P.E., Principal Engineer, Environmental Services**
Ramiro A. Chavez, P.E. PgMP, Director/City Engineer, Environmental Services Initial CMS Initial RAC
COPY: **City Council and City Clerk**
SUBJECT: **Resolution – Amendment to Interlocal Agreement with Washington State Department of Ecology to Monitor Contaminants of Emerging Concern in Stormwater and Storm Sediments – January 6, 2026**
DATE: **December 9, 2025**

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution authorizing the execution of an amendment to the interlocal agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology in the amount of $2,099,756, for a total of $3,324,043, accepting and depositing said sum into the ES Stormwater Fund 4301, to monitor stormwater transport of contaminants of emerging concern in Western Washington through March 31, 2028.

BACKGROUND:

This Department's Recommendation is Based On:

Resolution 41463 authorized the interlocal agreement (ILA) for $1,224,287 with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to begin this multiphase project which is collecting a one-of-a kind robust dataset on stormwater carried contaminants of emerging concern (CEC), specifically persistent, bio accumulative, and toxic compounds such as PFAS, 6PPD-quinone (6PPDQ), and microplastics that are believed to be hazardous to human and environmental health. These high-profile chemicals have not been previously characterized in municipal stormwater systems in Western Washington. Environmental Protection Agency and Ecology are actively pursuing regulation of these chemicals in stormwater discharge permits as well as scientific and engineering studies to better understand fate, transport, and treatment.

This amendment extends the timeframe and adds funds, $2,099,756, bringing the total ILA up to $3,324,043 to continue, as intended, the second phase of the project. Phase one of the project is nearly complete, there are 16 monitoring stations built, and monitoring has successfully started. Environmental Services (ES) will continue to manage this project for another year and a half of data collection to gather the full intended 2 years of samples. ES laboratory is the primary chemistry laboratory and is also partnering with the University of Washington-Tacoma (UWT) laboratory, and other subcontracted laboratories for microplastics. A portion of these Ecology funds will also be used directly to cover ES laboratory costs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

This amendment to the ILA would continue the fund sampling for these CEC in stormwater in Washington and remains the only project at this scale. Outreach for support on this study included development of a technical advisory team made up of over a dozen other City or County stormwater permittees. Most also participating in the study. This project utilizes the new method developed by our ES laboratory for 6PPDQ to analyze storm sediment samples. Findings will help all Washington State MS4 permittees prepare for compliance requirements in the future, and findings will be incorporated into several of Tacoma's stormwater planning strategies for stormwater management which both have their own topical and public meetings.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:
By definition, a 'toxic' contaminant harms humans and wildlife such as orcas and salmon either directly or indirectly by accumulating or impacting Tribal and City resident food sources and environmental wellbeing. In Tacoma the abundance of some toxic contaminants such as metals and PCBs are well understood, but the concentration of new CEC such a of PFAS, 6PPDQ, tire-wear particles, and other microplastics are not well studied anywhere in Western Washington. This ILA will support a field study to gather the first comprehensive Western Washington dataset to understand the abundance of these CEC and this data will inform the following strategic policy goals: Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents. Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs. Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment. Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents. Specifically, findings from the monitoring study will be used in the City of Tacoma's new modeling tool developed in the Urban Watersheds Protection Plan (UWP Plan). The UWP Plan prioritizes sub-basin areas across the city for additional stormwater management based on Tacoma Equity Index, known areas of degraded surface water quality, and critical areas overlays to prioritize human and environmental wellbeing for future stormwater management.

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score*: Select Index Score.
Increase the number of infrastructure projects and improvements that support existing and new business developments.

Livability: *Equity Index Score*: Select Index Score.
Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.
Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).
A clear understanding of the abundance of these CEC in stormwater and storm carried sediments will allow us to refine the UWP Plan to prioritize efforts to control sources of these contaminants in areas of greatest needs across the city. Actions include source control activities to track and stop sources of toxics into the City's stormwater systems. Other actions include building or implementing more stormwater best management practices to prevent and reduce concentrations across different land uses of the City. The Washington State Department of Health, Ecology, Washington State Department of Transportation, and other agencies are evaluating environmental impacts to salmon and other affected fisheries, Tribal food security, human health, and receiving waters for many of these CEC, and the EPA and Ecology have begun to add requirements to draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Do not accept the funds from Ecology for the monitoring study.	End the obligation to manage the contract.	End the project prematurely, limiting utility of the 6 months of data collected on these contaminants. Lose robustness from the intended 3 year study.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

ES staff intend to use significant findings in the City's stormwater management program and stormwater design manuals, stormwater comprehensive plan and the UWP Plan which shape the nature of stormwater actions taken in each of the basins discharging the City's stormwater to ground or receiving waters. This data will aid with decisions on where to add stormwater treatment across the city and help us compete well for grant funds to build stormwater treatment facilities that will best protect natural resources and people.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

ES recommends approval of this ILA to study the abundance of these pollutants in both stormwater and storm sediments, to manage our liability under our stormwater permits and to begin to investigate how and where to minimize harm to our residents and natural resources.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funds received from this interlocal agreement, deposited into the ES Stormwater Fund, will be used to study CEC in both stormwater and storm sediments around the city and region.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. ES Stormwater Fund 4301	521900	6232300	-$2,099,756
2. ES Stormwater Fund 4301	521600	5310100	$2,099,756
TOTAL			**$0**

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

ES STORMWATER FUND 4301

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW

Cost impacts will be approximately $1,000,000 for 2026 and the remainder will be in 2027-28. The Stormwater Fund will absorb this impact with existing planning dollars.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

NO

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

NO

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

NO

ATTACHMENTS:

- Amendment 1 to Interlocal Agreement C2500002 with Ecology.