



Puget Sound Nutrient Regulations

City of Tacoma | Environmental Services

City Council Study Session
December 2, 2025



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OVERVIEW



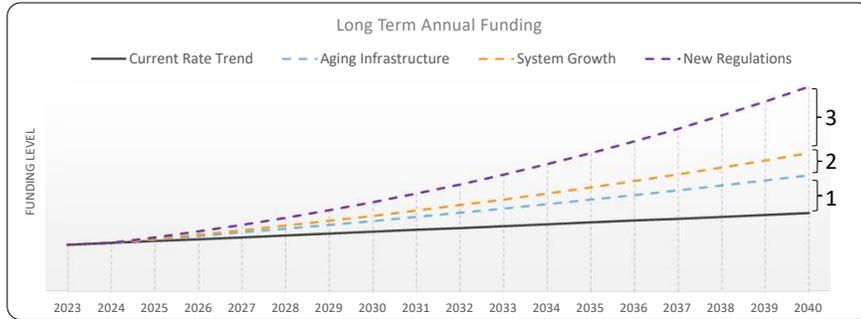
- Washington State Department of Ecology's regulatory approach for Puget Sound nutrients
- Impact to City and Wastewater Utility
- City's comments on Ecology's draft documents

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ES ASSET FUNDING RISKS

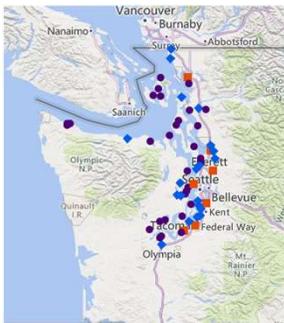
- Gap 1: Funding to maintain the status quo
- Gap 2: Funding for increased capacity to accommodate growth
- Gap 3: Funding for future regulatory requirements



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BACKGROUND



Washington State Department of Ecology

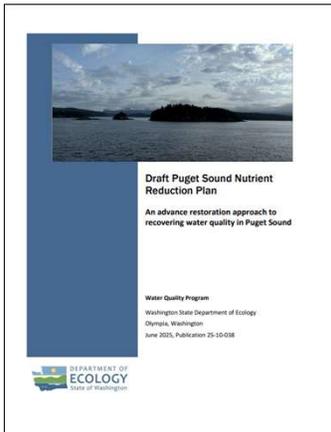
- 1967 Water Quality Standard
 - Complex issue, influenced by many factors
- 2022 Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit
 - 58 Wastewater Treatment Plants
 - Monitoring
 - Engineering Evaluation
- Permit Appeal
 - February 2025



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BACKGROUND



- Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit:
 - Voluntary Permit – 58 Wastewater Plants
 - Pre-2021 Nutrient Caps and Corrective Actions
 - Engineering Evaluation
- Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan:
 - Regional Limits (Wastewater and Stormwater)
 - More Stringent Treatment Limits
 - Compliance by 2050

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FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE



Affordability

Avoid significant utility rate increases.



Growth

Ensure regulations allow for housing and economic development.



Benefits

Align actions with sound science and measurable outcomes.



Partnership

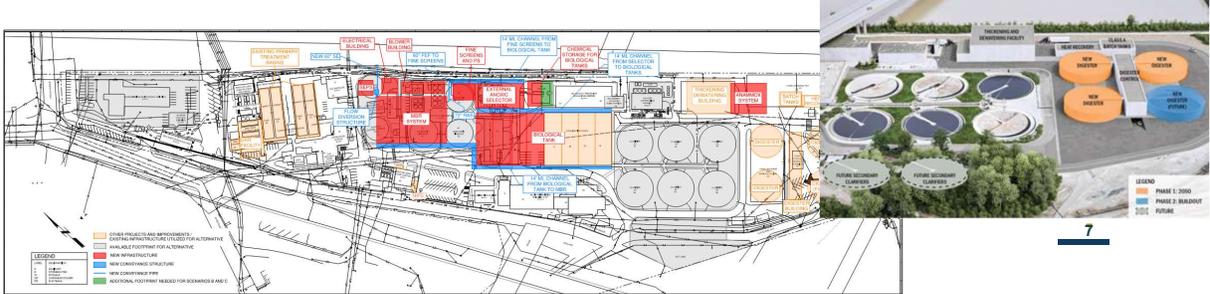
Collaborate transparently to find workable, long-term solutions.

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AFFORDABILITY IMPACTS

- Capital Cost Estimates: \$625M to \$1.25B+
- Rate Impact: \$68 to \$400+ (2050)
- Percent of burdened households will increase from 14% (2025) to 67% by 2050.



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IMPACTS: HOUSING

- Growth Management Act obligations
 - Home in Tacoma
 - Affordable Housing
- General Permit:
 - Caps at Existing Loading and Corrective Actions
- Reduction Plan:
 - Caps Effluent Flows and Loading at 2014 levels

More housing choices



Small Multifamily 60% AMI	Multifamily Units 70% AMI	Duplex/Triplex 120% AMI	Cottage 120% AMI	Townhome 140% AMI	Single Family 175% AMI
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IMPACTS: POWER



Mayfield Dam

- Estimated increase in power demand starts at 3 – 4 times
- Challenges with broader regional power demands
- More coordination needed with Power Utilities

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EVOLVING SCIENCE



- New science is available
- 1967 Water Quality Standard
- Salish Sea Model
- Collaboration Remains Key

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PARTNERSHIP AND BENEFITS

- Collaboration between:
 - Regulatory Agency
 - Wastewater Utilities
 - Environmental Community
 - Academic/Scientific Community
- Examples:
 - San Francisco Bay Area
 - Chesapeake Bay
- Results:
 - Transparent approach
 - Effective and strategic implementation



ACTIONS

- Governor’s Office meeting
- Director of Ecology meeting
- AWC and Utility Leaders letter to Governor’s Office
- Upcoming Ecology tour of Central Treatment Plant
- Voluntary completion of Planning Evaluation
- Voluntary monitoring





NEXT STEPS



- Regional Approach
 - Affordability
 - Growth
 - Benefits: Supported by science
 - Partnership: Meaningful Collaboration

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