

Dear Chair Sarah Perry and King County Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Sound Cities Association (SCA), we are writing regarding Proposed Ordinance [X] 2027 Proposed Solid Waste Fees. Given current rate proposals and forecasts of multiple years of sharply rising rates across multiple utilities, SCA is concerned about how the proposed solid waste rates contribute to this unsustainable trend.

The proposed rate increase is 8.5%, which is estimated to be an increase of \$0.73 per month for a residential customer with a 32-gallon garbage can. Rates are projected to increase by 8.5% annually through 2032, with the increases compounding each year. Though solid waste rates are not projected to rise as dramatically as other utility rates, these increases contribute to the cumulative burden borne by ratepayers and add to our region's overall affordability crisis.

We thank the Solid Waste Division (SWD) for their work to control costs throughout this rate-setting process and to establish a stable projected rate path. These efforts are critical in ensuring that infrastructure needs are met while mitigating ratepayer burden. For example, previous rate projections were over 10% for 2027 and SWD ultimately recommended a rate below that at 8.5%.

We support the call by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) and Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC) for continued cost-saving efforts and a return to multi-year rates. Specifically, we support:

- The continuation of cost-saving efforts that balance rate increases with ratepayers' ability to pay;
- A return to a multi-year rate to provide stability and predictability for ratepayers;
- A comprehensive rate approach that factors in local increases and increases to other utilities' rates, especially those operated by the County, to understand overall ratepayer impacts; and
- Convening a second Regional Utility Rate Summit to holistically address the aforementioned concerns.

We are committed to maintaining a safe and effective system to protect public and environmental health. While we recognize that an adequate revenue stream is needed to achieve these goals, we must collaboratively identify measures to mitigate future utility rate increases, especially as investments for long-term disposal anticipated in the next solid waste comprehensive plan will be significant.

Thank you for your responsiveness during the last rate setting cycle and for your collaboration throughout this year's process. We look forward to continuing to collaborate on follow-up work following last year's Regional Utility Rate Summit and on ratepayer affordability given the growing affordability crisis.

Sincerely,  
[SCA Board of Directors]

Cc: Girmay Zahilay, King County Executive  
Mo McBroom, Interim Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
Rebecca Singer, Director, Solid Waste Division  
Ali Blum, Government Relations, Solid Waste Division  
Solid Waste Advisory Committee Members