

City of Tukwila

Please see the attached comment letter from the City of Tukwila.



August 10, 20201

Eleanor Ott
Department of Ecology
Sent Via Email: Eleanor.Ott@ECY.WA.GOV

Dear Ms. Ott,

I am writing today on behalf of the City of Tukwila with concerns regarding the proposed Nutrient General Permit for wastewater treatment plants in Washington State. Like other urban jurisdictions around the state, our concerns are twofold:

- The potential costs associated with compliance – that will ultimately be borne by rate payers – could be staggering and add a significant financial burden on families; and
- Unresolved questions as to whether additional regulations on wastewater treatment plants are the best, most cost effective and quickest way to achieve our joint goal of reducing nitrogen levels in Puget Sound.

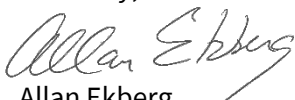
Because of these concerns, the City of Tukwila is requesting that Ecology slow down the Nutrient General Permit process, convene key stakeholders and scientists and collaboratively review all alternatives.

The City of Tukwila's median income is 40% of King County's, and many of our residents live paycheck to paycheck. Too many spend such a high percentage of their income on housing that little is left every month for other life necessities. With the potential of this permit significantly increasing wastewater rates in the coming years, we are concerned that this cost burden would be too much for many residents, further exacerbating existing issues and potentially becoming a factor in pushing more residents out to farther flung places with lower housing costs.

We share Ecology's desire to bring back a healthy, vibrant Puget Sound. However, it is unclear at this time whether this Nutrient General Permit would be the most expedient and effective way to reach our shared goal. We know other strategies also have promise to reduce nitrogen levels, including a concentrated effort to fix or replace the thousands of faulty septic systems in the region. Further actions such as reducing agricultural and storm runoff and an elevated protection and restoration of wetlands are also strong contenders to improve the Sound.

I appreciate having the opportunity to comment on behalf of the City of Tukwila. We do hope that you will slow this process down and convene a group of stakeholders and scientists to truly understand both the ramifications on rate payers for this proposed Nutrient General Permit, as well as other scientifically based solutions to improving our region's most important water body.

Sincerely,


Allan Ekberg
Mayor


Kate Kruller
Council President