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The PSNRP, as currently framed, places an enormous and unsustainable financial burden on Western Washington residents. With billions of dollars in projected costs, the Department of Ecology must take a harder look at new, fair, and targeted funding sources rather than relying solely on wastewater utility ratepayers.

First, implement a dedicated tax on all items and materials tied directly to wastewater generation—anything flushed down toilets and all plumbing-related products. These are user-based, cause-related revenue streams that link payment to impact.

Second, on-site septic system owners in urbanized areas must also contribute. Their systems may not discharge to sewers, but their nutrient impact still reaches the Salish Sea through groundwater, stormwater, and surface water pathways. Exempting them shifts costs unfairly to sewered communities.

Finally—and most critically—if Tacoma, King County, and Everett wastewater treatment plants are responsible for roughly 85% of point-source nutrient loading, funding should reflect that reality. A regional model where moderate and small loaders contribute proportionally toward solving the largest problems would ensure fairness and deliver the greatest nutrient reduction per dollar spent.

Failing to diversify funding and prioritize major sources will result in skyrocketing utility rates, public pushback, and slower environmental progress. DOE must take a balanced, data-driven approach that matches responsibility with contribution.