

SNO-KING WATER-SEWER DISTRICT COALITION

2015 Legislative Agenda

Statement of basic principles: The municipal, water-sewer districts of Alderwood, Coal Creek, Covington, Cross Valley, Mukilteo, Olympic View, Sammamish Plateau, and Woodinville comprise the Sno-King Water-Sewer District Coalition. We are committed to providing safe, reliable, and economically priced potable water—for residential, commercial, industrial, fire protection, and other lawful uses. We also provide sewage collection, transmission, and treatment services and some street lighting services. In addition, we participate in local and regional water supply planning, system planning, and inter-system coordination.

All water-sewer districts--which are rate-payer based-- have an on-going, distinctive role in developing and sustaining utility services across the state, especially in facilitating public health and safety. Sno-King believes that revenues from rate-payers for water-sewer services be specifically retained for those purposes.

Sno-King members endeavor to actively and effectively fulfill their obligations to public health and safety; economic vitality & community development; environmental stewardship; and, quality of life for their rate-payers. We also meet the legislative, regulatory, security, and governance criteria imposed upon us. To convey concerns and discuss future alternatives, the Sno-King Board periodically adopts an agenda, reached by consensus, of legislative and regulatory objectives.

In 2015, Sno-King expects the following issues will be actively considered by the Legislature or regulatory agencies. Sno-King will engage these issues and urge their support from the point-of-view stated below.

Retain Public Works Assistance Account repaid principle & interest; restore revenue stream; and, adjust loan evaluation criteria. Revenues and account balances of the PWAA have been diverted to the general fund. Sno-King and many others want the Legislature and Governor Inslee to stop sweeping accumulated funds in the PWAA, restore the revenue stream and interest rates as originally agreed upon, and stabilize the loan application and selection criteria.

Amend RCW 35.13A, regarding assumption of water-sewer districts by towns or cities, to require district-wide vote or voter referendum. A city or town may currently unilaterally assume part or all of a water-sewer district's facilities or operations. Sno-King maintains that rate-payers should be able to vote on whether or not they want to be assumed.

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Amend rules regarding grinder pump responsibilities. Department of Ecology rules require that water-sewer districts be responsible for the maintenance and repair of "grinder pumps." Sno-King maintains that the rule should be changed to make grinder pump maintenance and repair the responsibility of the property owner. Pursue change to existing law if necessary.

Link water availability/proof of supply to growth management goals and subsequent building permits. Sno-King maintains that before a city or county issues development approval or building permits that the **applicants demonstrate the availability of adequate water supply.**

The Department of Ecology has the responsibility under current law to enforce the limits on withdrawal of water from permit exempt wells. That requirement is not being fulfilled. Sno-King supports measures resulting in **better management and oversight of withdrawals from permit exempt wells**, whether they are stronger direction from the Legislature, earmarked funding, or both.

Require that water-sewer **districts be notified of GMA plan amendment proposals.** Sno-King maintains that water-sewer districts should be notified in advance of proposed amendments to growth management criteria that affect their service areas.

Remove requirement that water-sewer districts be responsible for street lighting and allow currently maintained street light systems to be divested.

Investigate billing non-district customers for fire protection benefits. One way to accomplish this would be with a billing system imposed as a property is being developed adjacent to and potentially benefiting from a water purveyor's fire protection system.

Insure that RCW 39.80, regarding architect/engineer contracting, would allow a water-sewer district to "piggyback" with a municipality on projects with substantial common elements without having to go through the full architect/engineer selection process.

Support amendment of RCW 57 to make several minor house-keeping amendments—(no enabling act policy changes).

Resist legislation to require billing adjustments (beyond consumption) to empty lots in mobile home parks and manufactured home parks. **Retain authority of locally elected officials to set rates.**

Support raising bid-exempt contract limit from \$20,000 to \$90,000 for water-sewer district work (matching city and county limits).

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Support allowing a water-sewer **district to become its own warrant originator**, if of a certain size (unilateral if state-audited revenues are larger than \$5,000,000, if state-audited revenues are \$250,000-\$5,000,000, then permitted with county consent).

Issues to Monitor:

Changes in **fish consumption regulations/statutes** that would further tighten wastewater/storm water discharge standards.

Metal theft prevention legislation.

Oppose allowing injection of storm water that would threaten water supply integrity.

Track amendments to rules regarding land surveyors and engineers. Sno-King insists that rule changes that define the duties of a land surveyor or engineer not encroach upon or restrict the current flexibility a water-sewer district has to determine, identify, mark, or change easements and related matters.

Sno-King continues to **oppose mandatory residential fire sprinkler installation**.

Proposal(s) for development of a **dedicated water-sewer development fund**. A couple of ideas have been circulated that would provide lock-box dedicated funding and funds for state-level water-sewer development loans or grants. Sno-King will track with interest any such proposals and consider supporting one or more proposals that would benefit Sno-King members.

Oppose any change to lien laws.