



King County Executive  
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STATE OF WASH.  
 UTIL. AND TRANSP.  
 COMMISSION

March 4, 1994

The Honorable Mike Lowry, Governor  
 Third Floor, Legislative Building  
 Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Action

Dear Governor Lowry:

The purpose of this letter is to call your attention to actions by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) which are in conflict with policy direction given by the Legislature. On February 9, 1994, the WUTC adopted rates for Eastside Disposal Company that do not comply with the policy direction set forth in RCW 81.77.030. This statute calls for the WUTC to require "...certificate holders under Chapter 81.77 RCW to use rate structures and billing systems consistent with the solid waste management priorities set forth under RCW 70.95.010...." RCW 70.95.010 prioritizes waste reduction and recycling above disposal of waste.

Since 1988, King County has followed an aggressive waste reduction and recycling policy. Waste management policies enacted by the King County Council that year were reinforced by the Legislature's adoption of the Waste Not Washington Act in 1989, establishing state priorities for waste reduction and recycling over disposal as waste management strategies. King County has energetically implemented a wide variety of programs in support of this policy direction and are well on our way to achieving the 50 percent waste reduction and recycling goal set forth in the Waste Not Washington Act and in the King County Code.

However, this recent rate action by the WUTC has undermined these efforts. In spite of the protests of over 100 customers and testimony by King County's Solid Waste Division Manager requesting that the WUTC adopt rates which would make it cheaper to recycle, the WUTC adopted rates which will adversely affect King County's recycling progress. The approved rates make it cheaper to dispose of two cans of solid waste than to recycle. This is in direct conflict with the Legislature's finding that "Steps should be taken to make recycling at least as affordable and convenient to the ratepayer as mixed waste disposal" (RCW 70.95.010(10)).



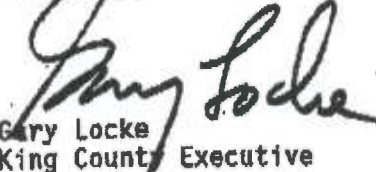
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King County has filed a request for reconsideration with the WUTC. I hope that the WUTC will take this request seriously and act affirmatively. I would also appreciate any direct intervention you could provide at this time to assist King County in achieving the necessary rate structure to support waste reduction and recycling.

If you would like to discuss this or if I can provide any additional information, please call me at 296-4040 or Rod Hansen, Solid Waste Division Manager, at 296-4385.

Sincerely,



Gary Locke  
King County Executive

GL:CJS:cz  
wutcgov.let

cc: Representative Nancy Rust, Chair, House Environmental Affairs Committee  
Senator Karen Fraser, Chair Senate Ecology and Parks Committee  
Senator Emilio Cantu, Washington State Legislature  
Representative Ida Ballasiotes, Washington State Legislature  
Representative Jim Horn, Washington State Legislature  
Senator Dan McDonald, Washington State Legislature  
Representative Bill Roams, Washington State Legislature  
Representative Steve Van Luvan, Washington State Legislature  
Metropolitan King County Council  
Paul Tanaka, Director, Department of Public Works  
ATTN: Rodney G. Hansen, Manager, Solid Waste Division