



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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Mike Moss  
Director, Cowlitz County Department of Public Works  
1600 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Kelso, WA 98626

**RE: Cowlitz County Solid Waste Management Plan Cost Assessment Questionnaire  
TG-220033**

Dear Mike Moss:

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) has completed its review of the cost assessment questionnaire for the preliminary draft of the Cowlitz County Comprehensive Solid and Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan (Plan) submitted on January 13, 2022.

The County contracts with Waste Control, Inc., to provide long-term solid waste handling services, including processing, recycling, transfer, transportation, and disposal of solid waste in the County. Through interlocal agreement with the cities and the County's contract with Waste Control, all municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in the County must utilize the established disposal system to achieve flow control.

The County's solid waste handling and disposal system is a transfer-based system. All residential and commercial MSW generated in Cowlitz County is commercially collected, brought by the public to the Toutle MSW drop-box facility, or brought by the public directly to the Waste Control Transfer Station. Commercial collection trucks and drop boxes are then routed to the Transfer Station and Material Recovery Facility, where the MSW may be lightly sorted to recover recyclable or reusable materials and then consolidated into transfer trucks. The transfer trucks then transport the MSW to the Headquarters Landfill.

The primary regulated hauler in the County, Waste Control, does not currently provide curbside recycling collection service in its certificated area, but does provide curbside recycling collection service in its city contract areas of Longview and Woodland. However, Waste Control, under contract with the County, provides a recycling drop-off center at the Transfer Station for public

use and maintains drop-off centers in Willow Grove, Toutle, Kalama, Rose Valley, and Woodland. Unmarketable materials are not accepted at the Transfer Station in Longview.

Tipping fees at the Headquarters Landfill, the Waste Control Transfer Station, and the Toutle Drop Box facility are typically adjusted biannually by a Consumer Price Index (CPI) factor. All proposed rate adjustments are reviewed and commented on by the Cowlitz County Solid Waste Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

The cost assessment questionnaire in the 2021-2026 Plan anticipates changes to tip fees at all its facilities. As a result, there will be rate impacts to ratepayers served by regulated solid waste collection companies in Cowlitz County. The tip fees shown below are the per-ton fees at the Waste Control Transfer Station, as this is the facility where all regulated MSW is taken within the County. Because these rates have historically been set using a CPI factor, recent inflationary trends have likely caused the estimated tip fee increases shown below to be understated. For the final iteration of this plan, the Commission would urge the County to update these estimates using the most recent data available, and to reflect the typical biannual adjustment schedule. Because the plan year includes 2021, during which time there was no disposal fee increase enacted, Staff has omitted the estimated bill impact for that year. The estimated impacts are shown in the table below.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
<b>Projected Disposal Fees</b>							
Per Ton Disposal Cost	\$55.81	\$58.18	\$59.34	\$60.53	\$61.74	\$62.98	
Per Ton Increase		\$2.30	\$1.16	\$1.19	\$1.21	\$1.24	\$7.17
<b>Projected Rate Increases</b>							
<i>Residential</i>							
Monthly rate for one 32-gallon can per week service		\$0.17	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$0.53
<i>Commercial</i>							
Monthly rate for one-yard per pick up service		\$0.90	\$0.44	\$0.45	\$0.46	\$0.47	\$2.72

Staff has no further comment on the cost assessment questionnaire. Please direct questions or comments to Greg Hammond at (360) 664-1278 or by email at [greg.hammond@utc.wa.gov](mailto:greg.hammond@utc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

AMANDA MAXWELL  
 Executive Director and Secretary

cc: David Pater, Department of Ecology, Solid Waste Planner