



April 15, 2024

Dear Lake Stevens Resident,

We want to keep you informed about an important initiative that has significant implications for our community's future: the potential assumption of the Lake Stevens Sewer District into the operations of the City of Lake Stevens.

Since 2017, we have been diligently working towards integrating the sewer district into city operations. This effort is driven by several key objectives: reducing organizational expenses, enhancing environmental stewardship, and stimulating economic growth. Over the past 18 months, both the city and the sewer district have engaged in collaborative negotiations to facilitate a smooth transition, with a primary focus on retaining all sewer district employees to ensure continuity of service.

However, despite our sincere efforts, negotiations have encountered unnecessary obstacles, primarily due to the sewer district's resistance to the assumption process. Regrettably, the sewer district has resorted to legal action against the city in an attempt to prevent the assumption from proceeding.

It's important to emphasize that the city has the legal right to assume the sewer district according to state law. Renewing legal intervention has become necessary to uphold principles of fiscal prudence, modernize infrastructure for public safety and environmental protection, and foster economic growth in our community.

An impartial third-party analysis indicates that assuming the sewer district could result in annual taxpayer savings of up to \$600,000. This consolidation of resources would streamline operations, reduce redundancies, and improve resident access to efficient services. Furthermore, integration would enable the city to make holistic decisions regarding environmental protection and project coordination, while also enhancing our ability to secure grant funding.

Recent actions taken by the Sewer District Commissioners, including substantial salary increases for top managers, raise serious concerns about transparency, fairness, and fiscal responsibility. Such actions undermine the negotiation process and erode trust in the integrity of the merger discussions.

Environmental stewardship and economic development are paramount considerations in this process. Failing sewer and septic systems pose risks to our lake's health, and a lack of sewer infrastructure in our industrial area hampers job growth and economic development.

The city's pursuit of assumption aligns with our commitment to establishing a wastewater management system that promotes efficient government, environmental sustainability, and a unified community vision. We encourage you to visit our website at www.lakestevenswa.gov for more information on this important initiative. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we remain dedicated to serving the best interests of our community.

Sincerely,

Brett Gailey, Mayor