



King County

Wastewater Treatment Division

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

King Street Center
201 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

April 2005

Dear Community Member:

King County is responsible for protecting public health and the environment by conveying and treating wastewater in the central Puget Sound region. As our population grows, we need a new wastewater treatment plant, called Brightwater, to serve people who live and work in north King and south Snohomish counties. Scientists are learning more about earthquake faults that are located throughout the entire Puget Sound region, including in the vicinity of the proposed treatment plant site, and we are using that information to design and build Brightwater to withstand potential earthquake damage.

In December 2003, after a multi-year siting process and careful review of the Brightwater Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), other information, and public comment, King County selected a site for Brightwater at the intersection of State Route 9 and SR-522. This site is large enough for the treatment plant facilities and more than 40 acres of open space for the community.

In subsequent studies conducted in cooperation with King County, the U.S. Geological Survey found an active fault on the Route 9 site a year after the Final EIS was issued. A fault is considered active in the central Puget Sound region if it has moved within about the past 16,000 years. Even though it is not at all probable that an earthquake would create a surface rupture anywhere on the Route 9 site during the estimated 50-year design life of the Brightwater Treatment Plant, we developed this Draft Supplemental EIS to examine the range of possible impacts if an earthquake anywhere on the Route 9 site were to damage new facilities on the treatment plant site. The Draft Supplemental EIS also identifies mitigation measures for protecting the public and the environment.

We cannot prevent a major earthquake from happening nor predict when or where it will occur, but we can protect public health by designing Brightwater to reduce potential damage, coordinating plans with emergency responders, and training staff to respond to situations that could occur. Based on the new information, we have added more measures to protect against potential seismic damage. These additional measures, described in the Draft Supplemental EIS, include designing Brightwater to withstand with minor damage the very unlikely scenario of a major earthquake that includes a surface rupture on the documented fault that crosses the northern portion of the site.

We also examined earthquake scenarios that could lead to leaks from treatment plant facilities, including a surface rupture on a hypothetical new fault under a treatment process unit. While serious, this situation is purely hypothetical; we have no evidence of a fault under the wastewater processing structures. The probability of such a major earthquake occurring on the site during the design life of the treatment plant is extremely remote.

Citizen participation in the environmental review for the Brightwater treatment facilities has helped us design a stronger, safer treatment plant. We are continuing our mission to plan facilities that safely convey and treat our region's wastewater, and your comments on this Draft Supplemental EIS can help us understand the issues we need to consider as we develop the Final Supplemental EIS.

Sincerely,
Don Theiler

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Theiler", written in a cursive style.

Division Director
King County Wastewater Treatment Division