



10311 Chambers Creek Road West
University Place, Washington 98467-1040
piercecountywa.gov/ppw

August 31, 2021

[Addressee Name, Title]
[Company]
[Address 1]
[City, ST Zip]

Subject: **Kapowsin Water District, July 2021 Declaration to the Court**

Dear [Addressee]:

As court-appointed receiver of the Kapowsin Water District, Pierce County has worked actively since 2017 to identify and develop a safe and reliable source of water and establish long-term system management. We also continue to provide daily maintenance and operations with our contractor, Valley Water District (VWD).

On July 26, 2021, Pierce County filed a required declaration with the Pierce County Superior Court describing the latest receivership actions, outcomes, and considerations toward a disposition plan. The full document, along with other past reports, is available on the Pierce County website at PierceCountyWa.gov/KapowsinWater.

As you may be aware, our multiple attempts over the years to find a viable solution have met complex challenges and financial constraints. Efforts to identify a new groundwater source undertaken in 2020 were unsuccessful. The results of the well drilling project lacked adequate flow to meet current system demand and tests of the water indicated a high level of treatment would have been required. The well was capped, and efforts shifted to finding an alternate solution.

Earlier this year, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) awarded a grant to VWD to conduct a feasibility study for connecting the VWD and KWD systems together by a transmission line, or “intertie.” The draft feasibility study is expected to be complete by September 2021 and will be shared with residents.

Regular water quality testing of the existing source has shown elevated copper levels in water from some taps. Upon investigation, we have confirmed there are no known copper piping or fixtures in the Kapowsin distribution system, other than residential plumbing fixtures in some homes connected to the

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system. The intertie project would resolve the elevated copper issue and would establish VWD as a stable, long-term owner and operator of the system.

In anticipation of the feasibility study supporting the intertie, we submitted three federal appropriation requests to Sens. Cantwell and Murray and Rep. Schrier to support the project design, permitting and construction. However, none of the requests were approved.

While Pierce County continues to pursue other sources of grant funding, it is highly unlikely that grants alone will be enough to offset the total multimillion-dollar cost of the intertie project. These costs will not be feasible for KWD customers to bear.

With the completion of the feasibility study in the near future we will evaluate next steps, which may include a disposition plan for KWD to transfer to a long-term owner with the existing source. We have requested an extension of the court review hearing to Feb. 25, 2022, to allow time to work through this process.

Meanwhile, we will continue our efforts to maintain and make necessary improvements to the existing system, including monitoring flow and installing two emergency generators to reduce prolonged water outages.

We appreciate your patience and understanding. If you have questions regarding the report, please contact us at (253) 798-4050.

Sincerely,

Jane Vandenberg, P.E.

Wastewater Utility Manager
Pierce County

2017

Nov. 29 Pierce County takes over Kapowsin Water District (KWD) as court-appointed receiver.

2018

Feb. 6 Pierce County receives \$500,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD) Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant for a new well and other system improvements.

Mar. 15 Pierce County locates and repairs a break in the surface water transmission line to the water system and ends emergency water haul-in for customers.

May 3 Community update meeting held at Kapowsin Elementary School.

2019

May 8 Pierce County receives Washington Department of Health (DOH) grant for \$500,000 to drill a new well. Second community update meeting held at Kapowsin Elementary School.

Sep. 30 DOH conducts sanitary survey inspection of system, and Pierce County conducts repairs to keep system in compliance.

Oct. 16 Pierce County advertises for bids on the well drilling project.

2020

Mar. 23 - Apr. 24 Tacoma Pump and Drilling completes well drilling through new COVID-19 challenges.

Mar. 24 Pierce County Council passes Emergency Ordinance 2020-44 providing customers relief on late fee penalties and interest during COVID-19 pandemic.

Apr. 29 - May 28 Lab tests show well water will be difficult and expensive to treat; pump test shows not enough production from well. Well project is terminated.

Aug. 14 Pierce County meets with DOH, Valley Water District (VWD), and Washington Water to discuss the feasibility of completing an intertie between systems.

Aug. 18 DOH notifies Pierce County that KWD copper concentrations exceeded federal and state action levels.

October VWD receives \$30,000 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Consolidation Feasibility grant to study the feasibility of connecting KWD to the VWD system via a wholesale transmission line. Study is expected September 2021.

2021

April - June Pierce County submits three requests for FY 2022 appropriations to Sens. Cantwell and Murray and Rep. Schrier. None of the requests were approved.

May 19 - Now Pierce County continues to apply the USDA-RD grant to reimburse 2017 emergency water hauling costs, and to refurbish and purchase standby generators for treatment building and booster pump.

Jun. 30 Pierce County submits Kapowsin Water System Corrosion Control Remediation Report to DOH summarizing existing water quality data and identifying technically feasible corrosion control systems to address copper exceedances.

Jul. 31 Pierce County submits status report to the Pierce County Superior Court.

