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Snohomish County Council Unanimously Approves Private-Public Cost Share to Reduce Lake Serene Flooding

Sixty-Seven Percent of Survey Respondents Favored Cost-Share Solution

EVERETT, Wash., March 29, 2017 – Today, the Snohomish County Council unanimously approved a long-term solution to ease high water levels on Lake Serene. Lakeside property owners were surveyed in February 2017 about potential solutions. Over 70 percent of those surveyed responded, and results showed a cost-share solution was favored by 67 percent of respondents. The proposed project will improve drainage flow and ease high lake levels. The emergency bypass pipe will be modified for a longer-term solution to the extreme flooding hazard. The estimated project cost is \$800,000, including the cost of the recent emergency bypass pipe.

Since the emergency bypass pipe has been completed on March 10, 2017, approximately 14.5 million gallons of water have drained out of the lake. This has lowered the lake level by 10.6 inches from the February 17, 2017 high-water mark, despite 7.3 inches of rain since that date.

“This has been a unique challenge for the county and lakeside community to work through,” said Councilmember Stephanie Wright. “I look forward to the completion of the project, which will provide more stability and predictable water levels during future rainfall.”

As part of the approved legislation, the surface water utility rates for lakeside property owners will be temporarily increased by \$197 per year. The surcharge will end after ten years and will pay for the private portions of the project. Surface Water utility rates charged in the Urban Growth Areas will be used to fund the public portions of the project. Lakeside residents will cover about 22 percent of the project, since they will receive a special benefit that the rest of the watershed will not receive.

Final design, permitting and drainage easement acquisitions are expected to be completed in 2017. Construction is tentatively scheduled for summer 2018. Based on requests from council and the public, the county is looking for ways to accelerate the project.

“We are proud of how quickly the Snohomish County Public Works team was able to design and build the emergency bypass, lessening the threat of significant damage to public assets,” said Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive. “The new solution approved today will work better than the original system. Winter high levels will be a bit lower than with the old system, without the constant threat of flooding. That’s a sensible solution to the problem.”

Lakeside residents have been experiencing flooding during periods of heavy rain. On February 13, 2017, Executive Dave Somers authorized an emergency action to begin building an emergency outflow pipe to prevent water from flooding county roads. The county immediately started to design and construct the emergency outflow pipe, which bypasses an existing failing outflow pipe on private property. The recently-constructed emergency bypass pipe system protects public infrastructure. The bypass also provides some relief to properties when the lake reaches high water levels, but the emergency bypass does not moderate the flows to the levels requested by many of the lakeside property owners.

Lake Serene is located in unincorporated Snohomish County, west of Highway 99 between Mukilteo and Lynnwood. For more information, visit the project [website](#) or view the project [proposal](#).

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