



December 15, 2020

The Honorable Douglas Richardson, Chair
and Members
Pierce County Council
930 Tacoma Avenue S., Room 1046
Tacoma, WA 98402

Re: Proposed Ordinance 2020-136s, terminating the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Interlocal Agreement

Dear Chairman Richardson and Pierce County Councilmembers:

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County opposes Proposed Ordinance 2020-136s, which would terminate the interlocal agreement with Tacoma through which the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department was formed. Although you have the statutory authority to take this action, the timing is very detrimental to the Department's ability to continue to deal successfully with the COVID pandemic and there has been no analysis or public discussion of the basis for such decision and for knowing what is in the best interest of the County at large.

The League of Women Voters only responds to issues like this when we have an adopted position derived from study and membership consensus. When this proposal first became public, we did not comment, because we do not have a position on health departments, per se. However, now that there is news that one of the key motivators is to have greater control over sewer and water regulations for new development, it is time to comment. The League has strong state and local positions related to these matters.

The League of Women Voters was among the early supporters of the Growth Management Act when it was originally passed and has long been active in regulations that preserve agricultural and resource lands, retain new development in urban areas and strengthen environmental controls. While it is possible that current WAC requirements for water, sewer and septic will be sufficient to retain the current local standards enforced by the Health Department, that possibility would logically rule out this proposed action as having no value.

Since it appears that the basis for this proposal is to weaken regulations and applications of them that affect sewer, water and septic systems, we strongly oppose this measure because it is detrimental to protection of the environment.

We ask that you NOT take this action today and at a minimum provide an opportunity for analysis of the pros, cons and potential impacts of this action, as well as public discourse about it.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

LWVTPC wishes to acknowledge that we gather on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish peoples, surrounded by their traditional waters, in the shadow of Mount Tahoma. We actively seek inclusive and respectful partnerships that honor Indigenous cultures, histories, identities, and current realities.

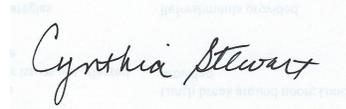
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Neither the proposal nor the process is in the best interest of Pierce County residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style. It is placed over a light blue rectangular background that contains some faint, illegible text.

Cynthia Stewart, President

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