

Clean Water Fee Reduction Program for Clark County Schools

Clark County Council Work Session

October 1, 2025



The background image shows a close-up of a storm drain. The drain is a metal grate with rectangular openings. It is surrounded by a concrete curb. The water level is high, overflowing the drain and creating a turbulent, muddy flow. Debris, including sticks, leaves, and small pieces of trash, is caught in the grate and floating in the water. The water is a murky, brownish-yellow color. The overall scene suggests a problem with stormwater management or drainage infrastructure.

Presentation Outline

1. Background
2. Participation
3. Challenges
4. Options To Consider
5. Recommendation

An aerial photograph showing a river winding through a dense forest. In the upper left, a small cluster of houses and green fields is visible, suggesting a rural or semi-rural area. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom center, where it meets a large, light-colored gravel bar. The surrounding forest is lush and green, with some trees showing signs of being cut or fallen.

Desired Outcome

- Council policy direction on Clean Water Fee reduction program for Clark County schools

Background



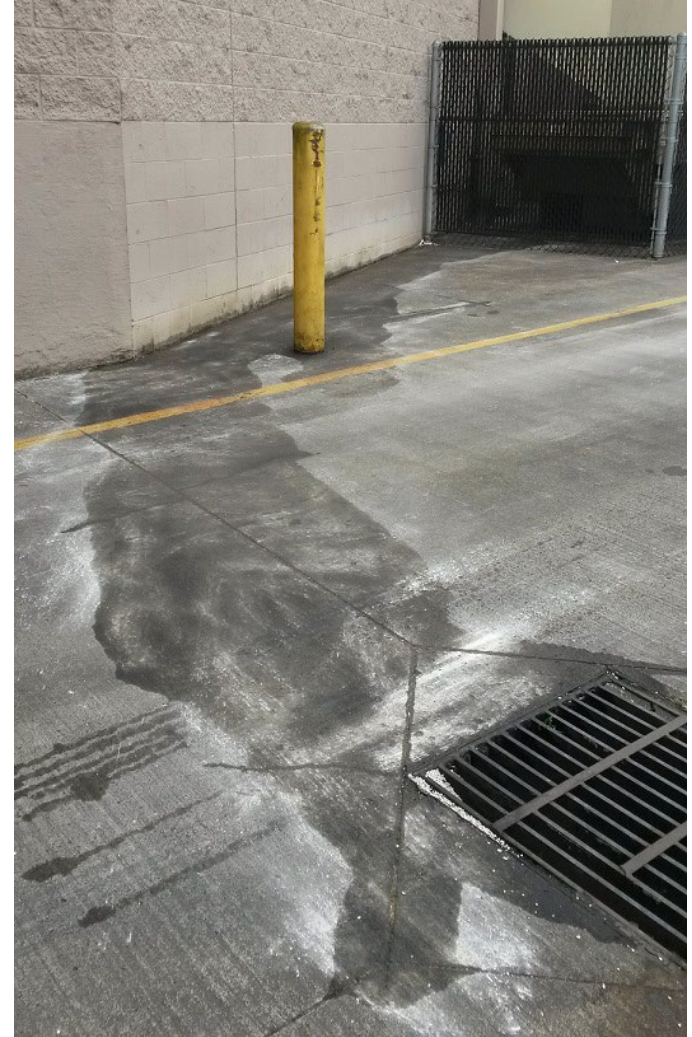
Fee Reduction Program For Clark County Schools

- 1999 – developing new Clean Water Fee, concerns about charging schools
- County responded with code
- Public and private schools eligible for a fee reduction:
 - How educational programs and community activities protect and enhance the surface and stormwater management system
 - Amount of protection and enhancement
 - Onsite stormwater facilities in compliance with County's best management practices (BMPs) manual
 - Mitigation impacts of stormwater runoff from the programs, activities and facilities



Qualifying For Fee Reduction 2000s

- **School districts and private schools:**
 - County staff trained school facilities and maintenance staff on stormwater BMPs
 - Reduced fees based on annual report of environmental education expenses



Qualifying For Fee Reduction 2013-2017

- **2011 Work Session** – County Commissioners request program review
- **New requirements** – each school completes to reduce a portion or all Clean Water Fees:
 - 2013 Fee reductions – Annual BMP trainings by County staff
 - 2013 Fee reductions – Onsite stormwater facilities pass County staff inspection
 - 2014 Fee reductions – Complete specific certifications in Washington Green Schools program




Qualifying For Fee Reduction 2018-2025

- **Four criteria:**
 - **1:** Stormwater BMPs Trainings
 - **2:** Stormwater Facilities Inspection
 - **3:** Qualifying Educational Program
 - **4:** Community Activity – Disseminate a Stormwater Message
- **100% Fee reduction applied to property tax balance**

School Activities for Stormwater
Know your watershed - know your waterway **A**

Make a lasting change
Create a project on your school grounds to make a change that will protect stormwater and the creeks, streams and rivers in our community.
Use this form to start generating ideas for change. Verify your project with the appropriate school representatives.

GRADES K-12



Spread the word! Let your school know about your project.
Protecting stormwater from pollution is important to our community. Storm drains lead to our local creeks, streams and rivers. Pollution has a negative impact on healthy water for fish, wildlife and people!
Remember, only rain down the storm drain!



Qualifying For Fee Reduction 2018-2025

- **Fee Year reduced and time frame qualifying activities completed:**
 - 2018 Fee reductions, qualify from August 2017 - June 2018
 - 2019 Fee reductions, qualify from August 2018 - June 2019
 - 2020-2024 No Fee reductions, no participation
 - 2025 Fee reductions, qualify from March - June 2025



Participation



Participation 2018-2019

- **2018 Fee Year**

- 15 schools participated in 1 district
- 14 schools qualified for fee reduction
- \$54,800 fees reduced

- **2019 Fee Year**

- 24 schools participated in 2 districts
- 15 schools qualified for fee reduction
- \$51,500 fees reduced



Renewed Participation In 2025

- **Proactive outreach to schools most impacted by increased fees**

- Battle Ground School District
- Evergreen Public Schools
- Vancouver School District
- Washington State University Vancouver

- **Additional school districts inquired**

- Hockinson School District
- Washougal School District



Participation 2025

- 49 eligible public and private schools
- 17 schools participated in 2 districts
- 6 schools qualified for fee reduction
- \$19,900 fees reduced out of \$336,000
- Impacts of condensed qualifying time frame



Challenges



County Challenges

- **Limited capacity for existing staff to:**
 - Provide guidance to schools with high customer service needs
 - Respond to many questions ranging from simple to complicated
 - Specify qualifying educational programs
 - Update numerous program resource documents
 - Track and evaluate if criteria are met



County Challenges

- **Need to evaluate program against best practices for rate credits**
 - Is program administration adversely affecting staff's ability to perform other key job responsibilities for permit compliance
 - Do the schools' qualifying activities reduce the current or future costs of the County's stormwater program
 - Are schools' qualifying activities required without this program
 - Should qualifying schools have onsite stormwater facilities to:
 - reduce the cost burden of the County's stormwater program
 - incentivize retrofits



County Costs To Administer

- **County revenue reduction**

- If all 49 public and private schools qualify
- \$336,000 fees reduced

- **County staff time spent on program**

- Inspectors – completing inspections and school trainings
- Education & Outreach – customer service and assistance to schools, evaluating criteria
- Financial Analyst – customer service and assistance to schools, multiple database tracking and analysis, requesting fee reduction for each school and confirming
- Division Manager – Final decision-making



School Costs To Administer

- **School staff time spent on program**
 - Programs required at each school
 - Facilities and maintenance staff trained to implement BMPs and maintain stormwater facilities to pass inspection
 - Teachers implement qualifying educational programs
 - Administrative staff disseminate stormwater messages with broader school community



Options To Consider



Where Are We Today

- Schools requesting guidance for 2025-2026 school year
- Program paused until Council work session
- Need to revise qualifying education programs
- Need to update program resource documents
- Need program policies and procedures for evaluating qualification standards



How To Proceed

- **Option A:** Pause the program, evaluate, determine future
 - 2026 Budget Request: Hire dedicated Clean Water Fee Administrator
 - Conduct analyses
 - Council resolution or ordinance
- **Option B:** Re-institute program as-is for 2025-2026 school year, 2026 Fee Year
- **Option C:** End program



Recommendation



Recommendation

- **Option A:** Pause the program, evaluate, determine future
 - **Need dedicated staff:** Hire Clean Water Fee Administrator in 2026
 - **Need program evaluation:**
 - Best practices for rate credits
 - Cost-benefit
 - Impacts to County revenue and expenses
 - Policies and procedures for evaluating qualification standards
 - **Need to codify program:** Council resolution or ordinance



Discussion

- What is Council's policy direction?



Thank you!

Comments and questions

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