

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on January 22, 2025.

1. **Effective Water Use in the City of Vancouver**

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS

1. Residents rely upon core infrastructure including water to support day-to-day life and livability;
2. While water availability and shortages may not be top of mind for Vancouverites given our beautiful natural surroundings, water is a precious resource; and with increasing extreme weather events and climate change, we may experience shortages;
3. Paradoxically, recent atmospheric river events and the impacts on stormwater/rainwater overflow underscore the importance of conservation with the need to balance rainfall management, just as heat domes do. Water metering is essential to reduce flow and volumes, and to rainwater management in our city;
4. Water meters are used to measure water usage. Most are installed on the water services that connect and supply water to buildings. Currently in the City of Vancouver, water meters are required to be installed into:
 - i. All newly built single and dual family homes;
 - ii. Existing residences that are being renovated or rebuilt;
5. There are opportunities to advance and expedite current plans to achieve greater adoption of water meters in Vancouver, as there are currently no requirements or incentives to install water meters in existing residences that make up the majority of homes in the city;
6. Affordability and rapidly increasing utility costs continue to plague residents. With water metering, the philosophy is that you only pay for what you use, and when you pay for it, people are more conscious of how much they consume;
7. Vancouver and the region are facing significant demands from aging infrastructure, as well as the need to support population growth and new residents. Water metering has financial benefits for infrastructure management (given that systems are designed for 2.5 times use), as well as environmental benefits. It costs Vancouver more than \$100 million annually to purchase bulk water from Metro Vancouver. The 2025 Annual Review of Water Rates and Water Works Bylaw Report (RTS #16422) indicates that the Water Purchase expenditure for Vancouver from the Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD) was \$100.3 million in 2024 and is anticipated to be \$107.5 million in 2025;

8. Currently water metering policy is squarely municipal jurisdiction, so the onus is on cities to advance their own water usage policies. Metro Vancouver may make recommendations to member municipalities but cannot mandate usage or regulate. That said, there is benefit in regional collaboration given Metro's role in the provision of major infrastructure, in order to achieve harmonization and greater impact;
9. Vancouver is behind other municipalities in the region. For example, in Richmond all single-family homes have been fully metered since 2018, and West Vancouver, Langley and Surrey are also metered. Burnaby residents in single and two-family homes will soon be getting water meters to track their water consumption – eventually leading to a pay-for-use water billing model in 2027; and
10. Water meters are a fair and equitable way of charging residents for water and will reduce the overall water consumption throughout the city. Water metering encourages conservation by giving residents and businesses direct feedback on their consumption, which leads to a reduction in overall water demand.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to report back by the end of April 2025 on opportunities to reduce water usage and increase the installation of water meters throughout Vancouver, including policy options for existing single, multi-family, rental, mixed-use strata and commercial buildings, potential timelines, analysis of financial benefits to the City as well as to residents, and opportunities to encourage adoption;

FURTHER THAT the report back includes any projected capital costs to be borne by the City to install water meters across Vancouver as a consideration for the 2027-2030 capital plan, and any opportunity to initiate a water metering program within the current capital plan.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to engage with Metro Vancouver on its current water infrastructure plans and initiatives as may be beneficial to help inform this work.

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