

July 26, 2019

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Finance & Neighborhoods Committee  
**From:** Karina Bull, Council Central Staff  
**Subject:** CB 119579 - Hydro Maintenance Workers Wage Increase

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On July 31, 2019, the Finance & Neighborhood Committee will discuss and may take action on [CB 119579](#), legislation submitted by Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR). The proposed legislation would raise the wages of Hydro Maintenance Workers I & II at Seattle City Light (“City Light”). This memo provides background on the proposed legislation.

### Background

Hydro Maintenance Workers are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the City of Seattle and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 77 City Light Unit (“Union”). Under the agreement, the Union may request and endorse a wage review of job titles, and a wage review committee at City Light may rule on wage increases.

In August 2018, the Union requested and endorsed a wage review for two positions: Hydro Maintenance Worker I and II. The scope of the Union’s request was limited to an adjustment in the top step of the wage progression. In October 2018, a City Light wage review committee determined that wage increases were appropriate for both positions due to increased scope of work, frequent needs for commercial drivers’ licenses, and below-market pay.

#### 1. Increased scope of work

- The positions were originally based on a laborer classification and evolved to include conducting public tours, maintaining remote camp site, supporting the skilled trades, and interfacing with the public. Common responsibilities include boat operations, campground maintenance, vehicle maintenance, and crew support

#### 2. Frequent needs for commercial drivers’ licenses

- Although the positions do not require commercial drivers’ licenses, the employees in this position are frequently asked to fill out-of-class needs for Heavy Equipment Operators and Heavy Truck Drivers that do require such licenses.

#### 3. Below market pay

- The wage review committee considered the wages of a comparator position in the Pend Oreille Public Utility District in Northeast Washington. The committee determined that the comparator position was paid at a significantly higher rate (\$35.77) for performing a smaller body of work than the Hydro Maintenance Workers.

- Notably, the collective bargaining agreement gave the committee full discretion to determine wage increases and did not require a formal market study on comparator wages.

The wage review committee determined that the wage increases, applicable only to the top step in the wage progression, would be based on a certain percentage of a “baseline wage” (i.e., the established wage for a higher-level, journey-level position) for the Hydro Maintenance Worker series.

The proposed legislation would establish (1) the baseline wage as \$47.51 effective January 23, 2019 and (2) the wage increases as follows:

<b>Hydro Maintenance Worker I</b>	<b>Top step</b>		
<b>Current</b> multipliers of the baseline wage	58%	61%	64%
<b>Proposed</b> multipliers of the baseline wage	58%	61%	75%

<b>Hydro Maintenance Worker II</b>	<b>Top step</b>
<b>Current</b> multipliers of the baseline wage	67%
<b>Proposed</b> multipliers of the baseline wage	79.63%

In application, the top step for a Hydro Maintenance Worker I would change from 64% to 75% of the baseline wage, resulting in a wage increase from \$30.41 to \$35.63 per hour. The top step for a Hydro Maintenance Worker II would change from 67% to 79.63% of the baseline wage, resulting in a wage increase from \$31.83 to \$37.83 per hour.

### **Financial Impacts**

The Executive estimates that the proposed wage increases would result in additional expenditures of \$77,000 dollars annually, which could be absorbed by City Light’s existing budget authority without further action by the City Council. The proposed wage increases would impact approximately nine positions and would take effect on the first day of the next pay period after the effective date of this ordinance. The proposed legislation does not include any retro pay.

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director  
Dan Eder, Deputy Director