



Date: November 19, 2021
To: Budget Committee
Re: BU35.2 - 2022 Rate Supported Budgets - Water and Wastewater Consumption Rates and Service Fees (Ward All)

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) would like to express our concern about the direction of Toronto Water's 2022 Rate-Supported Budget, particularly around the delays regarding stormwater management.

We fully support the City taking action to combat flooding in people's homes. As such, we acknowledge that the basement flooding program has taken priority in recent years. However, this should not come at the expense of other critical climate resilience infrastructure. Notably, the stormwater management plan is now delayed 10 years beyond the original 25-year plan set in 2003. Instead of being completed in 2028, it'll be done in 2039. This is irresponsible during a climate emergency.

TEA is concerned about the lack of urgency and resources to deal with the impacts of climate change. The stormwater management plan is severely underfunded and delayed.

Toronto needs to speed up this work, not slow it down.

If the City is concerned about the lack of revenue for the rate budget, Toronto could move decisively and implement a stormwater charge. At the July 5, 2021 Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting, Toronto Water staff said the City adopted rate increases to generate the capital we need and invest in a fully funded capital plan. Staff said it was not about generating more revenue, but changing who's paying for it (i.e. fairness).

However, this rate budget seems to indicate that the City could use additional funding and revenue sources - which a stormwater charge could provide. In the November 3rd Budget Committee meeting, Toronto Water staff asserted that the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan is funded, but that it's funded beyond the 10-year budget horizon. We would argue that this means the project is under-funded.

As aforementioned, flooding is a significant problem for the city and it's expected to increase as our climate changes. The combined sewer overflows pollute our rivers and our waterfront. We need to upgrade as much of

our city's infrastructure as possible. Our city was designed for a climate that no longer exists, and we need to move faster.

Done right, improving stormwater management in Toronto can also help meet our TransformTO and climate resilience goals, such as through the creation of new green infrastructure. TEA strongly encourages Budget Committee members to reflect on these considerations for the 2022 Rate Supported Budget.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DY', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Diana Yoon, Climate Specialist
Toronto Environmental Alliance