

2025 Forest Service Vault Toilet Pumping

MEMO

To: Executive/Budget/Audit Committee
Chair: Jeff Silvestrini, Co-Chair: Erin Mendenhall, Treasurer and Secretary: Christopher F. Robinson

CC: Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Public Utilities

From: Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Ben Kilbourne, Director of Operations

Subject: Forest Service Vault Toilet Pumping and CWC Support

Date: June 4, 2025

Vault toilet pumping on Forest Service land has recently become a national issue. Historically, the Salt Lake Ranger District's (SLRD) pumping needs have been largely taken care of by swiping a purchasing card to pay a cost-effective (\$375 per toilet) vendor that is not a contractor with the Forest Service. However, with new restrictions on the use of their purchasing card, they are unable to continue paying this vendor and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is working on a Forest-wide contract to cover pumping needs. This contract has not yet been awarded, and there is a possibility that the contract will not be awarded until after some of the toilets are due for pumping. It is also remotely possible that the contract will not be awarded at all. If it *is awarded*, the Forest Service will pay between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per toilet (compared to \$375) through that contract, which will further constrain their resources and their ability to do other important work. If it *is not awarded*, the Forest Service will have no other option and no ability to pump the toilets. Until a contract is awarded, there is a possibility of a true emergency situation in which toilets are full and not able to be pumped. This has been the case on other Forest Service land within the state and some restrooms have been shut down for this reason.

Within the tri-canyons area, the SLRD has an arrangement with Cottonwood Canyons Foundation to get vault toilets in Millcreek Canyon pumped, but there is no such arrangement for the 11 vault toilets in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons, each of which need to be pumped 1-2 times per year. The SLRD is seeking other partners who could help fund toilet pumping and pay their preferred vendor, Mountain Ridge Pumping (who does not want to work under contract). This is an opportunity for the CWC to step in and assist, and there are two ways this could happen:

- a) The CWC could budget \$5,000 to cover any pumping needs between July 1, 2025 and the time a contract is awarded (likely fall 2025, but also covers the remote possibility that a contract is not awarded for many months) to prevent a situation where toilets are full and restrooms are shut down. This could cost anywhere from \$0 to about \$5,000. If half the toilets needed to be pumped once during that time, it would cost about \$2,000. **The budgeted funds would only be used to cover pumping needs until a contract is awarded.**



- b) The CWC could budget \$5,000 to cover any interim pumping needs, as outlined above, as well as any other pumping that can be done with this amount throughout the fiscal year. Because the CWC can pay the SLRD's preferred vendor with a purchasing card, \$5,000 would cover about 13 pumps—enough for each toilet to be pumped once, and two toilets to be pumped twice. If the SLRD were to pay the FS contractor, if and when the contract is awarded, for 13 pumps, it would cost them almost \$20,000. The CWC has the ability to help pump toilets using fewer resources, allowing the SLRD to allocate those funds toward other needs. **In this scenario, it is anticipated that the full budgeted \$5,000 will be spent regardless of when a contract is awarded.**

The CWC's attorney has advised that, under the circumstances, the CWC could budget funds to make these payments on a short-term (one year or less) basis without a contract until the situation has stabilized, and we can re-assess the situation next year. In the meantime, the CWC could continue to explore ways to help the Forest Service use Mountain Ridge Pumping within the tri-canyons long-term, even after a Forest-wide contract is awarded, which would be a significant cost savings to the Forest Service. This could include seeking additional funding from Town of Brighton, Salt Lake City, and other partners to help cover these costs.

Staff would like the Board to consider budgeting \$5,000 as outlined above in scenario B.