

Committee Report

Environment Committee



Committee meeting date: February 10, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: February 25, 2026

Business Item: 2025-311

Ratification of Emergency Declaration for Red Dye Release and Roadway Remediation at Metro WRRF

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council ratify the Emergency Declaration for the red dye material release and subsequent roadway remediation at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, in an amount not to exceed \$288,671.78.

Summary of Environment Committee discussion/questions

- CM Carter: Were you able to identify what company caused this?
- Staff responded: Yes and we fully intend to recover cost.
- CM Carter asked: Is this the same red dye they use tracing water flows?
- Staff responded: No this is a cement dye.
- CM Wulff asked: Did this disrupt our treatment processes at all?
- Staff responded: It caused concern. We adjusted the process as necessary. There was no visible change to the Mississippi river and none of our permit parameters were exceeded.
- CM Lindstrom asked: You mentioned that it's non-toxic and what could this iron oxide do both for our plant processes and Mississippi river?
- Staff responded: We are prohibited from causing destruction to the river. We immediately contacted the Department of Health so they could notify the drinking water people downstream. We also have a stormwater permit that prohibits us from discharging spills to the river. In addition to protecting the water we have a lot of assets. This dye could have affected millions of dollars in assets if we didn't clean it up.

Motion by CM Jenkins, seconded by CM Morales. Motion carried.

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District(s), member(s):	District 14, W. Toni Carter
Policy/legal reference:	Council Policy FM 14-2, Expenditures for the Procurement of Goods, Services, and Real Estates
Staff prepared/presented:	Amanda Cerne, Director EC&S
Division/department:	Environmental Services

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council ratify the Emergency Declaration for the red dye material release and subsequent roadway remediation at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, in an amount not to exceed \$288,671.78

Background

On October 27, 2025, an industrial hauler discharged an unauthorized load of iron-oxide red dye material at the Metro WRRF. A second load was intercepted but resulted in additional dye being tracked throughout the facility. Approximately 3,934 feet of roadway were affected.

Emergency response contractors were mobilized and multiple removal methods were attempted, including vacuum removal, chemical washing, and mechanical sweeping. These efforts removed only a small portion of the dye, which had become embedded in the asphalt. Continued tracking posed operational and environmental compliance risks for the site.

On October 31, 2025, the facility determined that milling and overlaying the impacted roadway was the only effective corrective action. Repaving began immediately and was completed on November 5, restoring all affected areas. The cost of the emergency response exceeded the threshold requiring Council ratification.

Rationale

Emergency Declarations exceeding \$175,000 require appropriate Committee and Council ratification.

Thrive lens analysis

This action advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by ensuring rapid response to an

environmental incident, maintaining the integrity of wastewater infrastructure, and protecting regional water resources.

Funding

The total estimated cost for emergency response, cleanup attempts, and roadway resurfacing is \$288,671.78.

Small business inclusion

Due to the urgent nature of the emergency and the need for immediate mobilization, there were no Small Business goals established.

