

2015 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

County Fiscal Sustainability

Counties deliver constitutionally and statutorily directed state services to all of Washington's residents. The Washington State Association of Counties is working to secure the fiscal sustainability of all 39 counties by advancing legislation to control cost drivers and provide adequate revenue.

CONTROL COST DRIVERS

Ensure County Access to Public Employee Benefits Board Programs: Providing adequate and cost-effective health insurance for county employees is a significant challenge. Several counties have been denied access to the benefits provided by the PEBB, despite the fact that county employees are "public" employees. Counties should have access to health insurance benefits through the PEBB.

Legal Notices: The cost of meeting state requirements for providing legal notice are significant. Allow counties to meet legal notice requirements by posting notices on their websites or on a single statewide website.

Liability: Make common-sense amendments to Washington's expansive joint and several liability laws that will save taxpayer dollars.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE REVENUE

Protect State Shared Revenue

The loss of county revenue from prior state cuts means that state shared revenues are more important to counties than ever before. Protecting these fund sources is critical.

Revenue Flexibility

Real Estate Excise Tax Flexibility: Locally collected REET dollars are a significant source of funding for infrastructure. The uses and definitions between REET 1 and 2 need to be harmonized to eliminate confusion for the public and allow funding options for elected officials. Additionally, going forward these revenues won't be available for operation or maintenance and as a result counties can build new facilities, but not maintain existing ones. Flexibility is needed to allow a portion of REET to be used to maintain facilities acquired and developed with REET monies.

Permit Fee Flexibility: Counties have no dedicated fund source for mandated planning and code compliance activities, yet both are necessary to support economic and population growth in our communities. Allow building permit fees to be used to pay for long range planning and code compliance.

New Revenue

Direct revenue from recreational marijuana equitably to counties: New revenue from the sale of recreational marijuana should be dedicated to state services provided by counties.

Indigent Defense Court Rules: New funding is required to offset increased costs associated with implementation of the Supreme Court's Indigent Defense Rules establishing case load standards and increasing counties' costs.

Limit Property Tax Revenue Growth to Inflation and Population: Property taxes are counties' top revenue source, comprising approximately 60% of general fund revenue, but are capped at a level that doesn't keep up with costs. Property tax growth should be limited to inflation and population growth.

OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES

Support Transportation Reforms and New Funding: Provide reforms and new revenue sources to support critical transportation and transit priorities.

Explore Transfer of Federal Lands: Create a committee to review the potential benefits and risks associated with the transfer of federal lands to Washington State or its counties.

Funding for Chemical Dependency Treatment Services: A short term vendor rate increase for Medicaid chemical dependency treatment services is necessary to keep the provider network operating until new actuarially sound reimbursement rates are established and approved.

Adequate and Sustainable Local Public Health Funding: Washington's local public health system is in a very fragile position after years of funding reductions at all levels. Just as the work of public health requires many governmental and community partnerships, adequately funding the system must also be a shared responsibility between the State and local governments to ensure a consistent level of public health protection statewide.

Full Funding for DFW PILT Payments: Provide the Department of Fish and Wildlife with the resources to make full payments in lieu of taxes to counties.

Infrastructure Funding for Water Projects: Provide infrastructure funding in the capital budget for water supply, stormwater, flood control and other water projects.

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80%

Revenue Dedicated to
"Regional Service"

11%

Decline in Employees

Less
Than

1%

annual general fund
growth since 2007

75%

of Expenditures are towards
Public Safety

Name	Title	County	Cell Phone
John N. Marshall	Commissioner	Adams	(509) 660-3208
Jim Jeffords	Commissioner	Asotin	(208) 305-0283
Jerome Delvin	Commissioner	Benton	(509) 572-0756
Keith Goehner	Commissioner	Chelan	(509) 669-7338
Jim McEntire	Commissioner	Clallam	(360) 775-7357
Jeanne Stewart	Commissioner	Clark	(360) 397-2232
		Columbia	
Dennis P. Weber	Commissioner	Cowlitz	(360) 577-3020
Dale Snyder	Commissioner	Douglas	(509) 745-8537
Brad Miller	Commissioner	Ferry	
Bob Koch	Commissioner	Franklin	(509) 546-7088
		Garfield	
Carolann Swartz	Commissioner	Grant	(509) 750-8164
Frank Gordon	Commissioner	Grays Harbor	(360) 249-3731
Helen Price Johnson	Commissioner	Island	(360) 632-1168
Kathleen Kler	Commissioner	Jefferson	(360) 385-9100
Dow Constantine	Executive	King	(206) 296-4040
Kathy Lambert	Councilmember	King	(425) 260-7866
Robert Gelder	Commissioner	Kitsap	(360) 337-7080
Paul Jewell	Commissioner	Kittitas	(509) 201-6035
David Sauter	Commissioner	Klickitat	(509) 773-4612
Edna J. Fund	Commissioner	Lewis	(360) 269-7515
Mark Stedman	Commissioner	Lincoln	(509) 721-1829
Randy Neatherlin	Commissioner	Mason	(360) 731-3849
Sheilah Kennedy	Commissioner	Okanogan	(509) 322-6440
Lisa Ayers	Commissioner	Pacific	(360) 875-9337
Karen Skoog	Commissioner	Pend Orielle	(509) 447-4119
Jennifer Joly	Gov. Relations Dir.	Pierce	(253) 365-5687
Connie Ladenburg	Councilmember	Pierce	(253) 798-7590
Pat McArthy	Executive	Pierce	(253) 208-4160
Jamie Stephens	Commissioner	San Juan	(360) 472-0878
Kenneth A. Dahlstedt	Commissioner	Skagit	(360) 770-8652
Chris Brong	Commissioner	Skamania	(509) 427-3701
John Lovick	Executive	Snohomish	(425) 388-3797
Stephanie Wright	Commissioner	Snohomish	(425) 308-9675
Todd Mielke	Commissioner	Spokane	(509) 220-2200
Wes McCart	Commissioner	Stevens	(509) 496-6518
Bud Blake	Commissioner	Thurston	(360) 786-5440
Blair Brady	Commissioner	Wahkiakum	(360) 749-6618
Jim Johnson	Commissioner	Walla Walla	(509) 524-2505
Pete Kremen	Councilmember	Whatcom	(360) 739-1676
Jack Louws	County Executive	Whatcom	(360) 815-5225
Michael Largent	Commissioner	Whitman	(509) 432-3984
Kevin Bouchey	Commissioner	Yakima	(509) 728-0594

JANUARY

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- Start of Session
- LSC Reception
- LSC at the Capitol
- LSC Roundtable
- LSC Conference Call
- End of Session