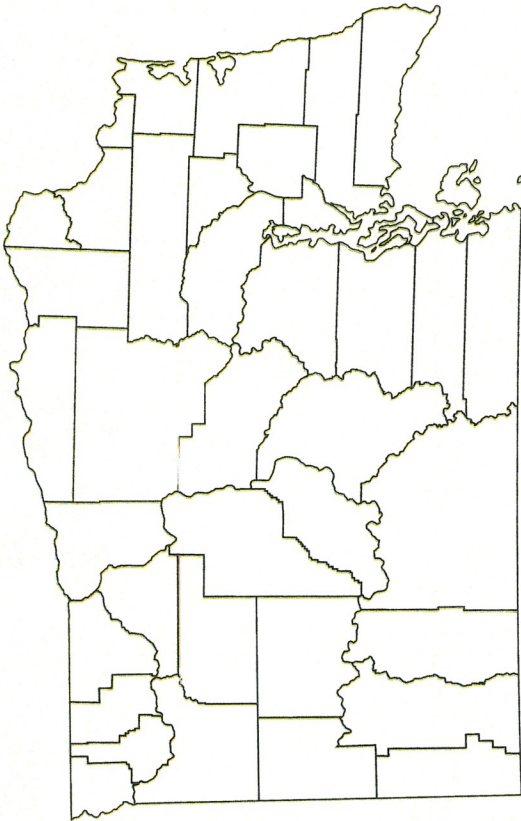


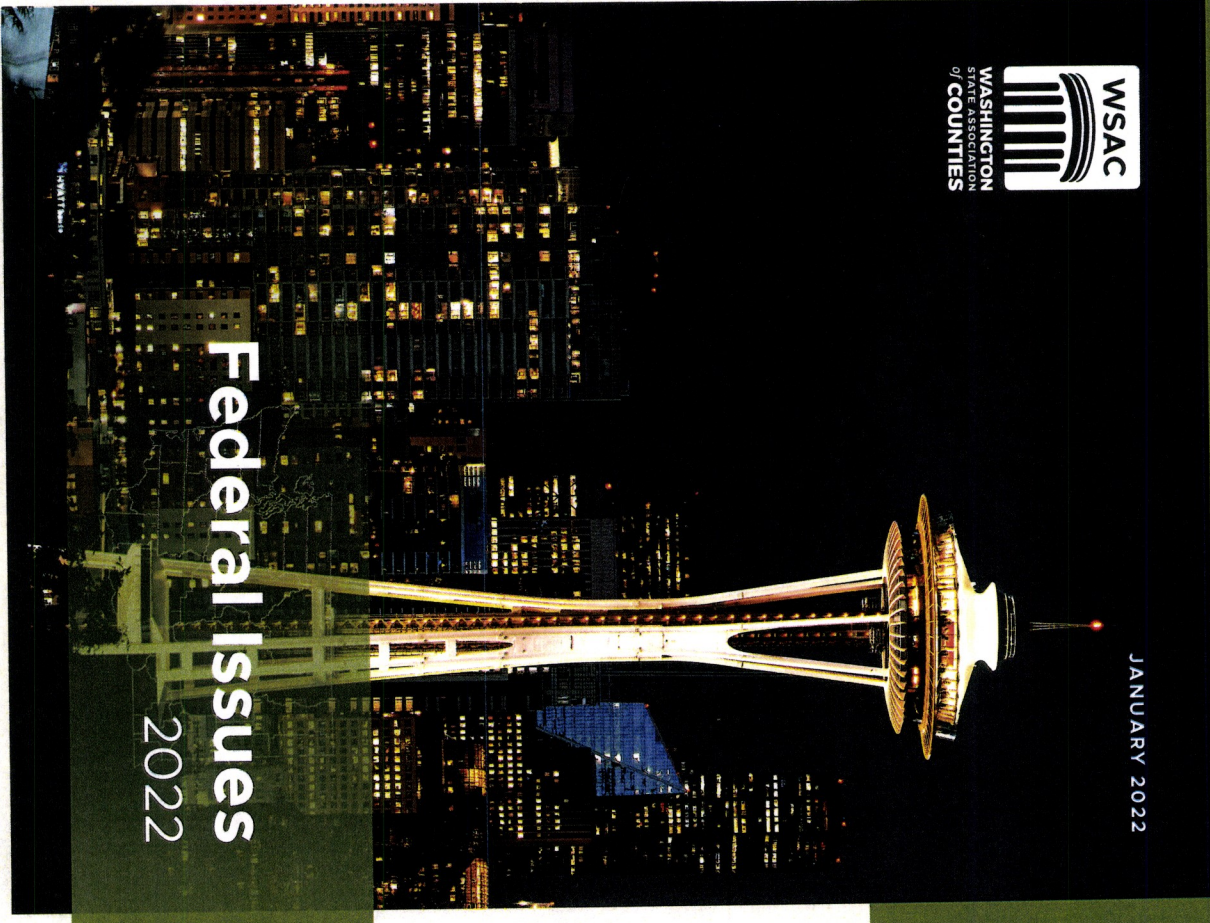


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JANUARY 2022

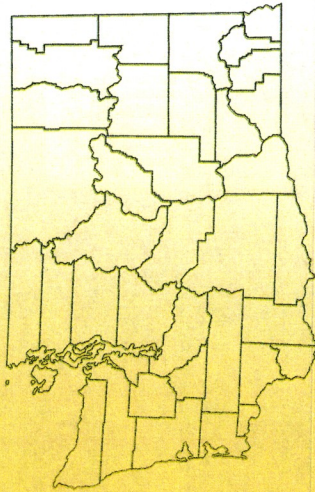
Federal Issues 2022



About WSAC

Created in 1906, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) serves the counties of Washington State. WSAC members include elected county commissioners, council members and executives from all of Washington's 39 counties. WSAC provides a variety of services to its member counties including advocacy, training and workshops, and a forum to network and share best practices.

On federal issues, WSAC works in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo).



Collaborative Opportunities

- Gather input and survey counties about your issues.
- Disseminate information.
- Coordinate response/action on common issues.
- Provide venues for presentations and dialogue amongst members

Core Member Services

- Professional Development & Training
- Business Programs and Services
- Advocacy with the Legislature and Executive Branch Agencies

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Ending Racial Disparities and Social Inequities

Health Disparities

Stable and adaptive funding for public health departments to increase capacity, modernize, and manage emerging threats and longstanding health impacts.

Public Defense

Adequate funding for trial court public defense costs to ensure the constitutionally protected right to a defense attorney for all.

State v. Blake

Provide funds to cover the full cost of the State v. Blake decision.



Making Long-term Investments, Securing Long-term Solvency

Road Maintenance

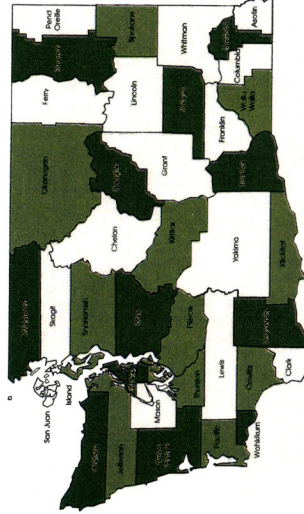
Reliable, sustainable funding for county transportation budgets.

Capital Investments

Counties are responsible for maintaining a variety of public facilities and infrastructure and need state investment in water, sewer, solid waste, and buildings to keep them safe and functional.

Fiscal Solvency

New authority for counties to control their cost drivers and grow revenue sources that keep pace with increasing costs.



WSAC is working to secure the fiscal sustainability of all 39 counties by advancing legislation to control cost drivers and provide adequate revenue.

Counties are responsible for providing essential services to every resident in the State of Washington. Yet, in a time of economic prosperity and population growth, counties are faced with budget shortfalls that are leaving critical investments in criminal justice, public health, and infrastructure at risk. Enacting the Washington State Association of Counties' 2020 legislative priorities will provide needed relief to county budgets and invest in the services counties provide to all Washingtonians.

2022 State Legislative Agenda

In Washington, state government's strength and the strength of the state's 39 counties are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. State government's success requires thriving, flexible, front-line implementation partners in counties. Counties' success requires an active, resourceful, supportive partner in state government. Here is how Washington's 39 counties and legislature can work together to make urgent progress on shared priorities in the 2021 Legislative Session:

Responding to the COVID Crisis

Disease Response

Adequate funding for case investigation, vaccination, and public outreach/education.

Disease Containment

Adequate funding for coordination of care for people isolated in quarantine who need support beyond testing.

Behavioral Health

Adequate funding for the behavioral health system, including jails.

Affordable Housing

New investment in stabilizing housing situations for tenants and homeowners.

Government Operations During the Pandemic

Modifying Washington's existing Open Public Meeting Act and Public Records Act to preserve their spirit while ensuring compliance.

Courts

Provide counties with funds to alleviate the impacts of the already backlogged court system worsened by the pandemic.

Combating Climate Change and Protecting our Environment

Climate Change

Adequate funding and flexibility to adapt any new climate change impact reduction responsibilities to local conditions.

Salmon Habitat

Adequate funding for repairing or replacing thousands of fish-blocking culverts in our state stream systems to ensure the state is in full legal compliance.

Forest Health

New resources for improving forest health, enhancing fire resiliency, responding and containing wildland fires, rehabilitating affected areas, and coordinating prescribed burns.

Waste Management

Modern, safe, and working infrastructure is critical to county solid waste programs meeting growing demands and protecting the environment. Dedicated funding for investing in the future of solid waste management is crucial for success.

Growth Management

Greater flexibility in managing growth, and a new, reliable, sustainable funding source for planning requirements, and funding for any new ones.

Water Quality and Water Supply

Dedicated funding for state programs that improve water quality or support and enhance water supplies to ensure counties' effective implementation.

Federal Issues and Relations Committee

Kitsap County Commissioner Rob Gaiden, Chair
Adams County Commissioner Dan Blankenship
Chelan County Commissioner Bob Bjugert
Benton County Commissioner Jerome Delwin
Clark County Councilmember Temple Lentz
Cowlitz County Commissioner Dennis Weber
Franklin County Commissioner Brad Peck
Grant County Commissioner Danny Stone
Island County Commissioner Janet St. Clair

Kittitas County Commissioner Laura Osadaaz
Lewis County Commissioner Lindsey Pollock
Lincoln County Commissioner Scott Hutsell
Mason County Commissioner Sharon Trask
Pierce County Councilmember Derek Young
Skamania County Commissioner Tom Lannen
Stevens County Commissioner Wes McCart
Eric Johnson, Executive Director

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Chris Branch	Okanogan County Commissioner
Ryan Mello	Pierce County Councilmember
Nate Nehring	Snohomish County Councilmember
Megan Dunn	Snohomish County Councilmember
Josh Kerns	Spokane County Commissioner
Wes McCart	Stevens County Commissioner
Tye Menser	Thurston County Commissioner
Satpal Sidhu	Whatcom County Executive
Art Swannack	Whitman County Commissioner
LaDon Linde	Yakima County Commissioner
Amanda McKinney	Yakima County Commissioner

Contact

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WSAC Federal Priorities 2022

- COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Recovery
- Medicaid Inmate Exclusion
- Infrastructure
- Active Forest Management and Catastrophic Wildfires
- Payments in Lieu of Taxes
- Secure Rural Schools

Land and Water Conservation Fund

WSAC supports \$900 million in annual funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). In Washington State, LWCF has provided over \$710 million to fund more than 600 projects over the past 50 years. These projects help to protect community greenspaces, build parks and trails, and improve boating and recreational access.

WSAC supports this annual funding provided there is a restriction on the purchase of federal lands by USFS, BLM, or NPS without coordination from the county legislative authority within which the property lies.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Recovery

Washington's 39 counties express thanks and appreciation to Congress for important investments that will allow counties to assist our communities, families, businesses, and individuals in recovering from devastating health and economic impacts from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

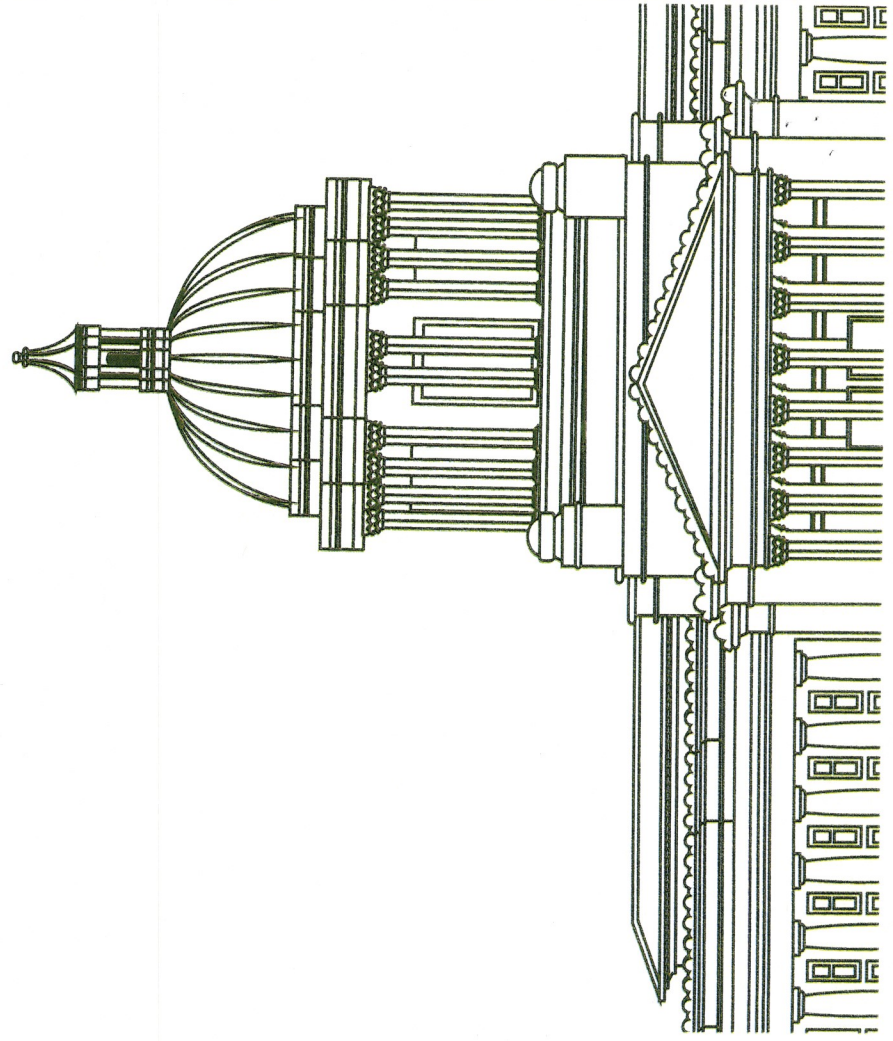
All counties, regardless of size and population, need continued access to direct, equitable, flexible, stable, and long-term funding to respond to the pandemic, rebuild the economy, and strengthen our communities. The initial Coronavirus Relief Fund, a part of the CARES Act, provided nearly \$950 million to our 39 counties and 35 local public health jurisdictions. The American Rescue Plan provided an additional \$1.5 billion to counties in Washington State.

Counties are the frontline response to population based public health in Washington State and the COVID-19 pandemic response. Counties and local health jurisdictions are:

- Coordinating vaccination information and providing immunizations;
- Conducting case contact tracing and investigation of positive cases and outbreaks;
- Coordinating complete care for families and individuals in isolation and quarantine;
- Assisting schools, businesses, and other organizations and institutions with pandemic response and recovery;
- Partnering with healthcare, emergency management, and state agencies to access PPE, conduct testing, implement isolation and quarantine facilities, and prepare for and implement mass vaccination plans; and
- Recommending safety practices and providing technical assistance for businesses, schools, and other institutions implementing Washington State's requirements and guidance.

We ask Congress to:

- Assure final US Treasury APPA Guidance provides clarity for counties to use funds to meet the unique needs of our communities as we continue to deliver critical services to residents, including those suffering from the economic, health, and mental health challenges due to COVID-19;
- Continue to respond, if necessary, with additional pandemic funding that provides additional direct, flexible, federal aid to counties of all sizes to support:
 - Disseminating culturally appropriate information to businesses and residents;
 - Testing;
 - Quarantine and isolation sites;
 - Conduct contact tracing and investigation;
 - Community assistance for a wide range of support for K-12 education, small businesses, food banks, housing assistance, and utility assistance;
 - Providing community support;
 - Coordination with medical community;
 - Providing accurate information throughout communities;
 - Preparing for mass vaccination and implementing state and local plans;
 - Shortages in supplies, testing, PPE, syringes, vaccine equipment, and kits;
 - Respond to community impacts including poor educational achievement, public health, social, economic, and health effects from the pandemic, including increases in substance use, mental and behavioral health needs, and suicide; and
 - Multi-year recovery needs to include economic recovery for individuals and businesses and also include public health infrastructure to address the increase of the health impacts.



Water Quality Standards – Clean Water Act

Continue the delegated authority to Washington State to develop local solutions to implement all facets of the Clean Water Act, without interference from Environmental Protection Agency, including finalization of:

- Washington State Water Quality Standards, including human health criteria; and
- Non-point pollution plan and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) permits.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Biggert-Waters Act

There must be a sustainable, fiscally responsible NFIP to protect the businesses and homeowners who built according to code and have followed all applicable laws. Congress and the Administration shall keep flood insurance rates affordable for citizens while balancing the fiscal solvency of the program.

Salmon Recovery and Watershed Restoration

All 33 counties are engaged in recovery of salmonid and endangered fish species, watershed planning, and restoration. WSAC supports the work of all of our basins and the work of the Congressional Puget Sound Recovery Caucus to improve the profile and standing of the Puget Sound under national restoration, conservation, recovery, and economic development programs for coastal and maritime communities.

It is important that there is an equitable method to provide federal funds go to on the ground, local government projects and programs supported by local implementing organizations, local governments, tribes, and citizens.

Endangered Species Act Reform

ESA reform must balance the protection of fish, wildlife and plant populations, responsible land, water, and resource management, and local economic community impacts.

Any reforms made to the program should address modernization of flood risk mapping, increased investment in mitigation activities at the county level, and consumer affordability.

Stable and predictable funding is needed for coastal, Puget Sound, and Columbia and Yakima River Basin recovery activities that include:

- Supports the PUGET SOS Act of 2021 – Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound, and Fish Passage Barrier Removal;
- Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration;
- National Estuary Program;
- Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Programs;
- Mitchell Act or other programs and services including appropriate hatchery activities that assist in our Regional Salmon Recovery Efforts;
- Non-ESA listed Species above Grand Coulee.

Medicaid Inmate Exclusion

The Social Security Act (Sec. 1905(a)(A)) prohibits the use of federal funds and services, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid, for medical care provided to "inmates of a public institution." This federal law, known as the "Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy," does not differentiate between a convicted inmate and a person incarcerated prior to conviction.

Congress needs to ensure rapid reinstatement of federal health care benefits for non-convicted justice involved individuals. Congress must address the crisis caused by this callous Medicaid inmate exclusion policy that strips individuals, who are still presumed innocent, of their federal benefits. The disruption in continuity of care for individuals caused by this federal regulation, especially for those with complex medical & behavioral health conditions, is of primary concern. This regulation impairs the ability to achieve good health outcomes as individuals transition in and out of our county jails and corrections system. Counties also struggle to contain uninsured costs when inmates lose benefits, driving medical costs up even further. This can result in early release and the dropping of charges to contain medical costs.

Infrastructure

Washington State is expected to grow by two million new residents over the next 20 years. It will take significant infrastructure investment to ensure we maintain and sustain a strong, competitive economy with thriving communities.

A collaborative project in 2017, and updated in 2020, of four Washington State associations (Business, Ports, Cities, and Counties) found "Washington's infrastructure needs are estimated to be more than \$190 billion." This study, *Building the Economy: Infrastructure Needs in Washington*, found the total investment, would result in an estimated 600,000 to 650,000 direct and indirect jobs. The Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) supports additional federal funding for critical public infrastructure to support a vibrant economy, public health and safety, and a sustainable environment.

Active Forest Management and Catastrophic Wildfires

Congress and the Administration must act to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. A joint study conducted by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service (USFS), and The Nature Conservancy found that 2.7 million acres of eastern Washington forestland needs restoration. Federal lands account for 42 percent of the unhealthy forest identified.

Policies and legislation, as well as pilot programs and projects, are needed to renew the federal government's commitment to manage federal forests for the benefit of counties containing federal forestland. Management should be conducted in a manner that produces a sustainable resource yield, improves forest health, protects the environment, and aids in the prevention of

WSAC supports the reintroduction into the 117th Congress:

- H.R. 1345 Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act;
- S.2626 Restoring Health Benefits for Justice Involved Individuals Act
 - This proposed legislation would remove limitations on inmate eligibility for Medicare, CHIP, and Veterans' health benefits; and
- S.2628 Equity in Prerial Medicaid Coverage Act
 - This proposed legislation would amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove a limitation on an individual's eligibility for medical assistance under the state Medicaid plan while the individual is in custody pending disposition of charges.

Specific examples of identified critical infrastructure include:

- Bridges
- Freight and Roads
- Freight Rail
- Aviation
- Wastewater
- Marine Ports
- Broadband
- Water Supply
- Stormwater
- Natural Resources
- Fish Barrier Removal
- Jails/Courthouses
- Renewable Energy and Distribution
- State and Local Ferries
- Water Storage and Distribution
- Infrastructure Resiliency

catastrophic wildfires. Additionally, the potential impacts of climate change is expected to have wide-ranging impacts on federal lands in Washington State. In recent decades Washington State has experienced significant droughts, floods, erratic snowpack, and several extreme wildfire seasons. These events and conditions are expected to become more common as the climate continues to change.

Catastrophic wildfires destroy public lands, jeopardize access to vital resources, decrease biodiversity, and impact public health and safety. WSAC believes that a comprehensive forest management approach is necessary to address this growing threat to communities.

WSAC Federal Priorities (continued)

Examples include:

- Providing federal funding to communities and counties to plan and prepare for the catastrophic effects of wildfires on federal forest lands;
- Incentivizing and supporting the use of forest products to create innovative products (such as mass timber, cross laminated timber) and byproducts (such as biochar);
- Supporting the development of a wood products campus in areas of the state that are fire prone, using the latest technologies to harvest timber from overburdened forests and produce lumber products for market, in turn improving forest health, preventing wildfires, and creating family-wage jobs;
- Directing the USFS and BLM to establish pilot programs to improve forest health and reduce the impact of catastrophic wildfires through the use of Good Neighbor Authority agreements with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources;
- Supporting funding for non-industrial small forest landowners for innovative programs to promote forest stewardship;
- Requiring the USFS and Department of the Interior (DOI) to increase the number of acres treated with controlled burns;
- Providing funding for both the USFS and DOI to plan, prepare, and conduct controlled burns;
- Providing additional funding for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, to implement controlled burns on county, state, and private land at high risk of burning in a wildfire;

Payments in Lieu of Taxes

Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is a vital funding mechanism to ensure counties receive property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021, Washington's counties (37 of 39) received \$24.9 million in PILT.

There are two other important payments provided to counties from the Federal Government:

- Refugee Revenue Sharing Act Payments to 25 counties, \$486,729 (FFY2020); and
- Department of Energy PILT (Hanford) for 3 Counties (Benton, Franklin, Grant) that receive approximately \$2.5 million (FFY2020).

Federal PILT is an important component of many counties' budgets despite the fact that it does not generate as much money as private landowner property taxes. One major challenge is counties do not know from year to year whether or how much funding they will receive from the federal government in PILT.

Columbia River System Operations

The Joint Record of Decision on the Columbia River System Operation EIS was signed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bonneville Power Administration on September 28, 2020. The Record of Decision is the final step in the Columbia River System Operations National Environmental Policy Act process. This Record of Decision follows a federal judicial ruling in 2016 which, for the fifth time, ordered federal agencies to look at all options to protect salmon in the Columbia River system. According to the Army Corps of Engineers:

"All alternatives were designed to benefit ESA-listed fish species. The alternatives represent different ways to balance the multiple purposes of the system. For example, some of the alternatives include more actions, or measures, to benefit fish, while some put more emphasis on power generation and other water uses. This allows the agencies to assess the full effects of achieving one set of objectives over another. The impacts of all of these measures will be documented in the draft EIS."

Any significant changes and proposals that negatively affect regional economic stability, impact flood risk management, irrigation, power generation, navigation, fish and wildlife, cultural resources, and recreation opportunities provided by the current system must be carefully considered.

Without adequate and convincing peer reviewed science, and assurances of the following issues, WSAC does not support removal of the four lower Snake River Dams:

- Continued flood risk mitigation and reduction management;
- Provision of replacement water storage and supply for municipal, industrial, agricultural, exempt well, and environmental benefits;
- Supply of clean renewable replacement power production to stabilize price and power needs;
- Financially viable and adequate infrastructure to support loss of navigation and river transportation;
- Funding to repair or replace roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure damaged by removal of the dams and lowering of water levels;
- Protection of all fish and wildlife resources;
- Protection of cultural resources; and
- Assurance from net negative impacts to agricultural production and food supply; and
- Additional options to increase salmon production and increase the health of the Puget Sound (and its species); and
- No loss in outdoor recreation opportunities or facilities.

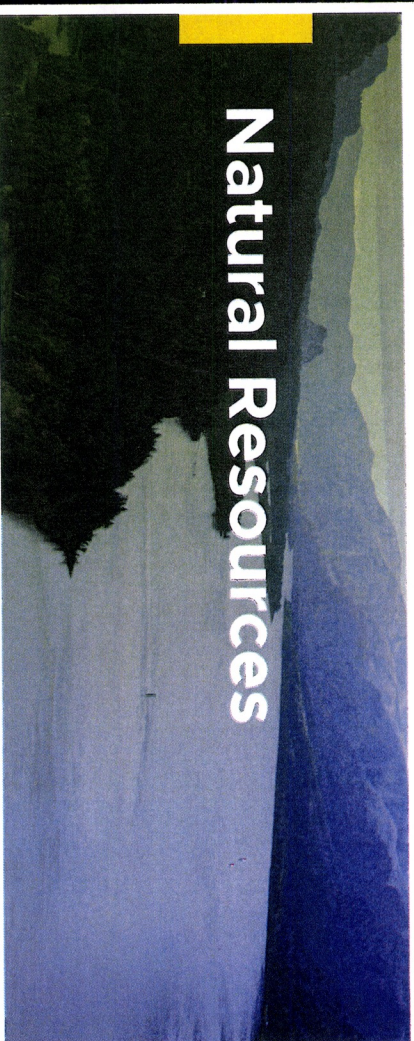
Waters of the United States

Washington's 39 counties maintain nearly 40,000 miles of roads and associated ditches, bridges, culverts, stormwater facilities, and other supporting transportation infrastructure. An updated "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) rule must ensure there is, at a minimum, a permit exemption for certain county road ditches.

Therefore, WSAC asks Congress to extend full, predictable, long term (10+ years) and/or permanent, mandatory funding for the PILT program, which fully and fairly compensates counties for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries and for the services they provide on tax-exempt public lands within their boundaries.

PILT funds are distributed with other local taxing districts that received property tax within the jurisdiction.

WSAC advocates that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) rewrite the WOTUS rule in a way that appreciates counties' role as owners and operators of key public safety and water infrastructure and as an intergovernmental partner in implementing federal regulations under the Clean Water Act.



Natural Resources

Federal Lands Transfer to the States and Local Governments
WSAC supports a systematic and factual review of the potential benefits and risks associated with the transfer of federal lands to Washington State or its counties.

Bonneville Power Administration

WSAC supports the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) remaining a federal agency and a publicly owned electricity transmission system.

The BPA is self-funding. It repays, with interest, the U.S. Treasury from electric rates set to recover taxpayer investments. BPA costs are paid for by customers who buy the electricity primarily through local public utilities.

Columbia River Treaty

Our counties along the Columbia River and within the Columbia River Basin are actively involved in participating in the update process for the Columbia River Treaty – an international agreement between Canada and the United States regarding the cooperative development and operation of the water resources of the Columbia River Basin for the current stated benefits of flood control and power.

It is imperative that the Washington State Congressional Delegation ensure that the input, participation, and decisions of local elected leaders are included in Treaty review and update. We ask the Administration and Congress to ensure that a modernized Treaty is designed to meet the future regional water supply needs for irrigation, municipal and industrial use, instream flows, navigation, and recreation.

Continued communications from the lead United States negotiator to keep counties, and other key local partners, is beneficial to keep local officials apprised of progress on meeting negotiating milestones and benchmarks. It is imperative that negotiations be complete prior to 2024.

Secure Rural Schools

Equally important to PLT is long term or permanent reauthorization and funding of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. In the short term, we support:

- Repealing the 5% automatic reduction in payment;
- Restoring full funding of SRS;
- Provide for yearly election of Title II/III designation; and
- Allowing Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) appointments to be made at the regional or local forest level.

We support restoring SRS funding levels back to historic 25% funding level counties received with inflation built into the payment mechanism. In FFY20, Washington's counties (27 of 39) received \$15.2 million in SRS funding, a decline from \$15.8 million in FFY 2019.

County	SRS/Fed FY 2020	PLT/Fed FY 2021	Dept of Energy FY 2020	Refuge (RASA) Federal	DEW PLT 2020-2022	DNR PLT FY 2021	DNR/Timber 6Yr Annual Avg	Total	% of Total Revenue
Adams	-	60,271	-	6,176	3,597	971	-	71,015	0.06%
Asotin	59,541	179,073	-	498	48,261	-	-	287,374	0.26%
Benton	-	184,224	858,544	6,404	-	-	-	1,049,172	0.95%
Chehalis	1,040,503	3,352,067	-	11,315	54,978	9,855	-	4,468,717	4.03%
Chelan	782,914	1,155,238	-	7,855	-	5,412	5,746,334	7,697,752	6.94%
Clallam	2,776	2,411	-	29,074	-	2,313	3,919,128	3,955,702	3.57%
Columbia	154,478	402,766	-	695	20,713	-	-	578,652	0.52%
Cowlitz	114,798	31,765	-	1,689	-	1,266	1,778,273	1,927,792	1.74%
Douglas	2	167,047	-	-	-	161	-	167,210	0.15%
Ferry	772,239	901,381	-	-	29,180	-	-	1,702,800	1.54%
Franklin	-	182,784	280,707	85	-	186	-	463,762	0.42%
Garfield	83,555	243,353	-	-	24,105	-	-	351,013	0.32%
Grant	-	804,652	643,642	5,947	37,443	278	-	1,491,962	1.35%
Grays Harbor	304,202	285,676	-	4,266	74,432	76,774	1,817,123	2,560,473	2.31%
Island	-	2,153	-	-	-	-	-	2,153	0.00%
Jefferson	794,102	1,643,245	-	26,490	-	91,306	1,909,383	4,464,526	4.03%
King	171,538	935,880	-	-	-	349,252	2,210,254	3,666,924	3.31%
Kitsap	-	-	-	-	-	52,892	905,231	958,123	0.86%
Kittitas	604,649	1,205,311	-	-	542,783	257,501	-	2,610,245	2.35%
Klickitat	42,886	117,365	-	42,557	78,558	53,010	104,720	439,096	0.40%
Lewis	1,559,064	687,075	-	237	-	2,185	7,937,784	10,186,345	9.18%
Lincoln	-	255,132	-	-	13,642	353	-	269,126	0.24%
Mason	299,839	331,886	-	-	-	22,190	4,667,881	5,316,796	4.79%
Okanogan	1,618,363	2,782,158	-	1,061	563,577	-	2,231,761	5,047,988	4.55%
Pacific	-	7,419	-	66,368	-	29,905	-	2,335,453	2.1%
Pend Oreille	629,807	1,190,789	-	412	20,004	-	-	1,841,012	1.66%
Pierce	872,946	7,064	-	1,745	-	779	426,586	1,495,957	1.35%
San Juan	-	-	-	-	-	17,748	-	24,932	0.02%
Skiagit	431,225	1,318,757	-	-	-	258,871	10,539,048	12,547,902	11.3%
Snohomish	2,794,088	344,800	-	8,185	-	87,826	1,979,333	5,214,212	4.70%
Snohomish	555,621	1,518,436	-	-	-	307,081	7,540,449	9,921,587	8.93%
Spookane	-	5,893	-	53,421	-	21,783	-	81,097	0.07%
Stevens	300,478	653,286	-	164,652	-	3,080	89,443	1,210,939	1.09%
Thurston	960	1,268	-	20,130	-	106,450	5,785,583	5,914,291	5.33%
Wahkiakum	-	-	-	15,077	-	5,803	1,735,454	1,756,333	1.58%
Walla Walla	2,558	31,168	-	5,260	-	-	-	38,986	0.04%
Whitman	829,132	2,078,845	-	-	-	5,832	3,247,184	6,160,992	5.55%
Yakima	1,110,173	941,596	-	7,130	491,623	23,162	-	2,573,684	2.33%
Totals:	15,253,371	24,946,423	1,770,893	486,729	2,002,896	1,876,453	64,565,952	110,914,717	100.00%

Budget, Finance, and Elections

Protect County Revenue and Investment Strategies - Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

Protect the legitimate use of, and expansion of, tax-exempt municipal bonds. This federal policy is no "loophole." Tax exempt municipal bonds help reduce the cost of debt service and program costs to citizens. Washington's counties support the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds to provide vital investment in public facilities from jails to roads, courthouses to parks, stormwater and wastewater treatment facilities, and other important community infrastructure. Washington's counties also urge Congress to restore the use of tax-exempt advance refunding bonds, which allow local governments to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars by refinancing outstanding debt.

Protect Defense Spending in Washington State

Federal military spending in Washington State is critical to the state's economy and many of our counties. Washington State is fortunate to contain a number of significant military installations including:

- Joint Base Lewis - McChord (Pierce/Thurston Counties);
- Yakima Firing Range (Kittitas and Yakima Counties);
- Fairchild Air Force Base (Spokane County);
- Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (Kitsap County);
- Naval Base Kitsap (Kitsap County);
- Everett Naval Station (Snohomish County);
- Whidbey Island Naval Air Station (Island County);
- Naval Undersea Weapons Engineering Station (Kitsap and Jefferson Counties);
- Camp Murray - State of Washington Military Department (Pierce County); and

Advance refunding bonds saves Washington State, counties, other municipalities, and taxpayers over \$110 million annually.

- Coast Guard Assets and Missions (Clallam, King, Whatcom, Pacific, Grays Harbor).

Washington's counties seek collaboration to address military installation impacts to communities, local and use, and natural resources while supporting the military objectives of these installations. Mitigation strategies, stronger bilateral and transparent communication with county government, and technical support are necessary to balance the competing needs in our local communities.

In addition to the federal military installations, our Washington State National Guard and Military Department are vital to providing support and response to state and federal disasters including floods, earthquakes, catastrophic forest fires, and other emergencies that outpace the ability of local emergency responders.

WSAC supports the findings of the National Commission on the Future of the Army that recommends sustainable resources for the Washington State National Guard.

Water Infrastructure

Congress needs to provide programmatic and project funding to support local and state investments in initiatives such as the:

- Yakima Basin Integrated Plan;
- Icicle Work Group;
- Columbia River Water Management Program;
- Chehalis Basin Integrated Strategy; and
- Completion of Congressionally Authorized Columbia Basin Project.

Broadband

Broadband access is critical to the modern economy, essential for education, and vital to health equity. It is increasingly essential to many activities of daily life and quality of life. Our need for strong and equitable access to broadband has been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to geographic, economic, and other barriers, access to quality, high-speed broadband lacks for far too many Washington residents. This access gap:

- Hinders counties' ability to provide vital services;
- Impedes telehealth access;
- Limits the opportunity to participate in remote work;
- Restricts economic growth for small business; and
- Creates inequitable access to support in remote learning and school activities

Long-term, sustainable funding from the state and federal governments is needed to provide an ongoing commitment to expand and maintain quality, affordable broadband access.

WSAC supports solutions that are flexible enough to fit specific geographic and regional needs. The state and local governments can better define and utilize local understanding and strategies to increase broadband access. Additionally, grant funding opportunities often focus on urban and rural areas, but unserved and underserved communities also exist in mid-density counties. Therefore, grant opportunities should be expanded accordingly.

It is important that Washington businesses and residences have access to at least one broadband provider with both upload and download speeds of at least 150 Mbps and that new minimum service must be scalable and provide capacity to meet future needs and avoid functional obsolescence.

These programs and associated projects are designed to support salmon recovery, improve ecological conditions, and support the growing demands on water supplies to support growth for industrial, agriculture, municipal, and exempt wells.

It is important to ensure there is an appropriate level of local input in FCC decisions regarding broadband deployment, infrastructure, and funding. The federal government should:

- Prioritize locally based companies in broadband procurement. Connect America Funding Phase II funding was released through an auction without any county or local government input. Companies without a presence, and as far away as Maryland, won this funding for a few rural counties in Washington, without a physical presence to supply the needed deployment and infrastructure needs;
- Amend the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) to require awardees to guarantee fiber to the premises in a timely manner and to prohibit a 10-year lockout of other providers;
- Revise and review FCC maps to determine accuracy. Other sources of data coverage such as speed tests, Microsoft data, m-lab and Google look data that has been ground truthed must be considered in funding decisions..
- Reconsider and revise FCC's new 5G rule that circumvents local government control over infrastructure. This new rule puts public safety at risk, is an unfunded mandate, preempts local decision making, and restricts franchise fees and charges; and
- Support local government flexibility to serve as retail network providers at their option including cities, counties, port districts, and public utility districts.

Transportation and Infrastructure (continued)

Airports and Aviation

Local and regional airports are essential to the economic wellbeing and safety of communities throughout Washington State. Unlike the greater Puget Sound region, most of our state is rural and heavily dependent on smaller airports for

economic development, public safety (especially wildfire response), and recreation. These local and regional airports have limited opportunity for revenue generation.

The following federal actions and support are deemed essential to the public safety and prosperity of our state:

- Enhance and expedite Airports and Airway Trust Fund support for Washington state's small and regional airports.
- Airport Rates and Charges. Ensure local governments and airport operators have full authority to impose and enforce fees, rates and charges, and other revenues dedicated to airport development, capital financing, and operations.
- Increase Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs) to supplement federal funds dedicated to airport capacity and development in Washington State.
- Off-Airport User Fees. Continue the authority for local governments and other public airports to set fees, rates, and charges for the use of airport facilities by off-airport business, with proceeds dedicated to airport development, capital financing, and operations.
- Federal Aviation Administration – Air Traffic Control (ATC) System. Do not privatize the nation's air traffic control system as we believe privatization will have a negative impact on rural airports and communities.
- Make appropriate investments in Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) modernization to make air transportation safer, more efficient, and more predictable.
- Increase federal funding to support municipal and regional airport infrastructure improvements essential to timely, effective, aviation-centered wildfire operations, and
- Authorize federal funds dedicated to matching state grants and not-for-profit public aviation programs chartered to improve the safety, accessibility, or economic value of public use airports in Washington state.

Stormwater and Water Quality

Federal funding is needed to invest in cost effective approaches to retrofitting stormwater facilities, collecting stormwater runoff in separate storm sewers, and discharging to surface waters as required under the federal Clean Water Act. It is important counties receive federal funding support to implement the Municipal Stormwater Permits and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits so these burdens do not fall solely on ratepayers.

WSAC supports funding to prevent and address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination. PFAS-contaminated water has been identified in the Issaquah and Dupont water systems, at Fairchild Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and Joint Base Lewis McChord. Additional remediation is likely necessary in other public and private water systems as additional testing is performed.

International Trade

Trade between the United States and other nations is vital to the economy of our counties and Washington State. Approximately 40 percent of jobs in Washington State are linked to international trade.

Appropriate legislation, policies, and investments are important to sustain and increase Washington's global competitiveness in the marketplace, including:

- Programs that increase present market share or develop new product markets;
- Eliminating trade barriers that limit the export of Washington based products; and
- Increasing federal, state, and local investment in freight mobility.

Elections

Washington State's elected County Auditors (and King County Election Supervisor) conduct elections in Washington State. Our counties are responsible to provide election staff, register voters, ensure the voter database is accurate and correct, acquire and maintain voting tabulation systems, voting centers, and all associated security for ballot drop box, facility, physical, and cyber. Federal funding and support, such as that provided with the Help America Vote Act, is imperative to assist in ensuring fair and secure elections. The funds allocated to Washington State through the Help America Vote Act, was often passed through to counties and used to:

- Continuously upgrade voting systems;
- Register voters in statewide voter registration databases;
- Develop, enhance, and maintain statewide voter registration/election management system;
- Provide provisional voting options;
- Improve voter accessibility;
- Ensure the integrity of elections; and
- Implement other improvements to the administration, outreach, and access, to voting.

WSAC supports elections being managed and conducted locally for security, integrity, and accountability. Further, counties encourage timely active military voting participation through secure and flexible mechanisms.

Public Safety, Health, and Human Services

Stable and Consistent Federal Funding for Public Health

Local public health has a critical and unique public safety role that is focused on protecting and improving the health of families and communities. Demand for governmental public health services has increased with the changing nature of preventable diseases, the resurgence of "historical" diseases, and the surge of new diseases and emergencies. In Washington State we are working to implement Foundational Public Health Services with increased State and local funding. Yet there is still inequitable funding for these services. Stable and consistent funding of key federal grants helps counties build resiliency in the event of health emergencies, outbreaks, economic changes, and natural disasters.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), Pandemic and All-Hazards and Preparedness Act (PAHPA), and the Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) grants provide local governments with funding to protect communities from threats and hazards to keep families safe and healthy.

Vaping and E-cigarettes

Nothing in federal law should pre-empt a local public health jurisdiction from creating more stringent local ordinances that protect the public from harmful substances, promote and implement nicotine cessation services, or prevent youth access to tobacco and other nicotine products.

- PPHF funds local prevention programs such as childhood immunization, vaccinations, communicable disease outbreaks, and chronic disease prevention.
- PAHPA funds local public health emergency response efforts in areas such as wildfire smoke and air quality, public health emergencies, and mass casualty events.
- MCH block grant supports projects that create a system of care for children and families.

Reductions in any of these federal grants will likely cause local programs to diminish with reduced or eliminated services to residents.

Fish Passage Barrier Removal

In 2001, 21 Washington State Tribes filed suit in Federal District Court seeking to compel the State of Washington to repair or replace culverts that acted as barriers to fish migration. Historically, culvert designs were constructed to meet the design and permitting requirements of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Hydraulic Project Approval permit.

Dissatisfied with the state's progress, the tribes sought and won a permanent injunction in 2013 that was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018, forcing the state to replace all offending culverts under state-owned roads in the area designated in the lawsuit (case area) by 2030. This case area includes an estimated 800 state-owned barriers within 14 counties surrounding the Puget Sound. The state has estimated costs in excess of \$7 billion to address the 800+ barriers under state roads.

Within the state case area, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) inventory lists over 3,200 known county-owned fish barriers, with an estimated potential for 10,000 county-owned barriers statewide. The cost to replace county-owned barriers in the 14-county case area is currently estimated to be nearly \$5 billion (this number is subject to change as new inventory, cost estimate, and information becomes available). Currently, the average cost to replace a culvert on a county road, usually with a short span bridge is \$1.125 million.

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund

The full expenditure of harbor maintenance trust fund collections needs to occur on dredging and harbor maintenance to provide equity for deep draft ports that contribute collections to the fund but do not have significant dredging needs by allowing them to utilize trust fund dollars for limited port-related uses other than dredging.

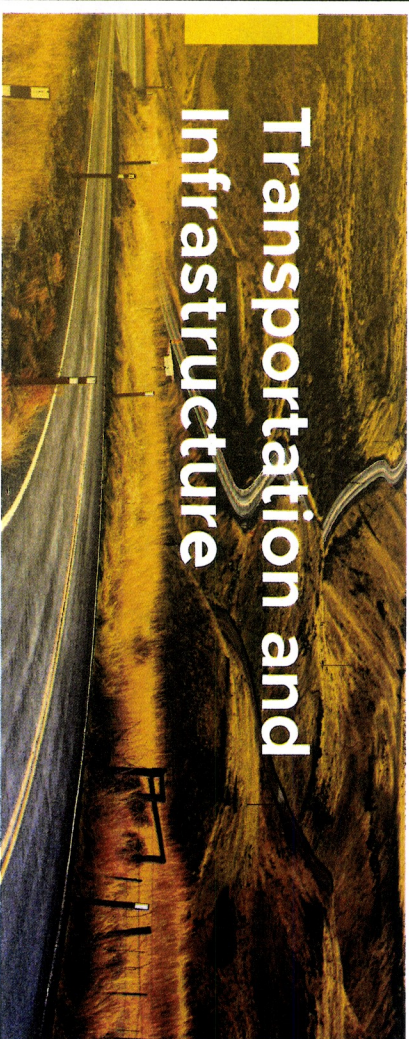
To this end, WSAC supports recent efforts by the U.S. House of Representatives which passed H.R. 2440, the Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act, and encourages the U.S. Senate to also consider this legislation that would allow appropriators to expend all trust fund revenues each year, eliminate practices of lawmakers moving money out of the fund to projects

Counties do not possess the resources to address a problem of this magnitude. On average, counties can afford to upgrade two to four barriers per year. The State of Washington continues to grapple with finding the revenue to cover its own \$7.7 billion responsibility, and Washington cities, that also own at least 1,200 fish blocking culverts, expect replacement costs to be several billions of dollars. All combined, it will cost the State of Washington and local governments more than \$15 billion dollars in repairs and replacements to fish passage barriers. A federal partnership is critical in addressing this problem of removing fish passage blockages to assist in the recovery of endangered salmon populations and the Southern Resident Killer Whale.

WSAC supports a watershed-based implementation strategy to fish passage barrier removal to ensure better outcomes that sequence and coordinate investments being made by the state, cities, and counties.

unrelated to ports and/or port development, and increase flexibility of the funds for donor ports.

Congress needs to fulfill its commitments to fully implement the deep-water port set aside to aid our deep-water ports and dredge-dependent ports on the Columbia River and within the Puget Sound



Transportation and Infrastructure

Transportation

Washington State's 39 counties are responsible for a significant amount of the transportation infrastructure in Washington State including:

- Over half of the centerline road miles in Washington State – 39,221 miles;
- 3,389 bridges greater than 20 feet, of which 600 are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete;
- 3,000 small bridges and thousands of culverts that likely impede adult salmon and other fish species from returning upstream for spawning;
- Five counties (Pierce, Whatcom, Wankiakum, Skagit, and King (passenger only)) operate ferry systems;
- King County operates the eighth largest bus transit system in the nation;
- Washington's counties are making significant investments in light rail and transit systems; and
- Regional and rural airports (in addition to Boeing Field (King) and Paine Field (Shoemish)) many counties own airports).

It is important for Congress and federal agencies to understand that counties are major owners of transportation infrastructure and should be provided levels of funding and authority that adequately reflect their role in the nation's transportation systems. We support:

- Using Highway Trust Fund revenue for a total public transportation program (roadways and transit)
- and retaining the existing budget treatment of the highway and mass transit accounts within the Highway Trust Fund;

- Ensuring the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund by considering revenue sources that will better capture all users of the nation's highways and account for all vehicles;

- Streamlining the administrative requirements of federal grant programs, as well as federal permitting regulations (e.g. NEPA), to direct more funding toward necessary road, bridge, and highway improvements;

- Providing Federal funding to implement the Washington State Ferries 2040 Long Range Plan; and
- Assisting counties, state, and other local jurisdictions invest in strategic improvements for more sustainable and efficient freight mobility system that reduces impacts on local communities and the environment.

In order to provide a greater range of transportation options to help reduce the impact of transportation related greenhouse gas emissions, Congress should:

- Invest in funding to improve transportation options by modernizing and reducing emissions of transit vehicles, such as expanding electric transit systems and/or hydrogen-based transportation alternatives;
- Invest in the build-out of a network of electric vehicle (EV) chargers within and between communities;
- Extend and expand clean energy and EV tax credits for businesses and consumers to spur demand for domestic manufacturing, accelerate clean energy and EV deployment, and grow our capacity to build those technologies in the U.S.; and
- Invest in multimodal solutions including bike and pedestrian access, heavy-duty vehicle electrification, and electrification options for low-income communities.

Behavioral Health

Elected and appointed county leaders are fully engaged in reforming the behavioral health system in Washington State. Our county jails continue to be the largest mental health institutions in the state and this is both morally and financially unacceptable. Further, the behavioral health workforce is woefully inadequate to meet the steadily increased need and demand for services. Counties will need federal support to increase workforce development, training, and retention.

Twenty-two counties and one city have implemented a 1/10th of one percent sales and use tax (approximately \$100 million) to support behavioral health services (accounting for approximately 90percent of available revenue). Counties have worked with the state to expand and integrate behavioral and physical health care services and create a seamless system of care.

Congress and Federal Agencies can assist by focusing on several items:

- Large-scale training programs to rapidly bring new behavioral health workers into the workforce;
- Support current workforce retention increasing federal Medicaid matches in order to help state and local jurisdictions offer more competitive pay and reimbursement;
- Permanently revise the federal institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion rule to allow Medicaid to be used for brief acute behavioral health care stays or support a Section 1115 Waiver that provides for this long-term in Washington State. This IMD rule prohibits Medicaid from reimbursing for both mental health and chemical dependency inpatient services in facilities with more than 16 beds. If this rule were to be suspended or eliminated there would immediately be additional detox, triage, and inpatient treatment beds available;
- Revise 42 CFR Part 2 confidentiality rules for federally funded programs that treat substance use disorder (SUD) patients to align with HIPAA;
- Expand funding to implement electronic client management systems and technology to integrate with electronic health records to better integrate primary care, behavioral health, and social determinants of health;

Opioid Dependence, Overdose and Fatalities

We appreciate Congressional legislative efforts to address one of the most pressing public health and safety challenges facing Washington State today. According to the University of Washington's Addictions, Drug & Alcohol Institute the total number of drug-caused deaths involving opioids in 2019 was 852. There was a 43 percent increase in these deaths in 2020 to 1219 overdoses. According to the Washington State Department of Health, in the first three months of 2021, Washington State had "almost 420 overdose deaths of which almost 50% have been due to fentanyl".

- Expand access to medication-assisted treatment and provide additional Medicaid-funded Suboxone treatment slots;
- Support federal legislation, such as the Tele-Mental Health Improvement Act (HR 2264/S 660);
- Provide flexibility when implementing federal legislation, programs, policies, and rules associated with behavioral health programs and services to meet the most pressing local needs and the most prevalent mental health issues for clients;

- Funding:
 - Workforce training and retention;
 - Substance use disorder services;
 - Detox services;
 - Youth early intervention and substance abuse disorder programs;
 - Supportive housing opportunities for individuals with behavioral health issues as these are foundational to people's wellbeing and ability to stabilize and seek treatment, including low barrier housing;
 - Transportation – as it is often an obstacle to sustain treatment for clients and access services;
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for behavioral treatment for older adults to improve access to care for those most vulnerable within CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services);
- Opportunities to provide best practice programs and services partnering the courts, criminal justice system, and co-occurring service providers to manage system impacts and reduce costs;
- Availability of evidence-based programs for early detection and intervention of children and youth who are developing mental health issues, including psychosis;
- National education on drug take back so citizens know why and how to dispose of their no longer needed prescription drugs; and
- Removal of barriers to and create additional support for retreatment opportunities.

The consequences of opioid addiction are reverberating throughout society, devastating families, and overwhelming health care providers, law enforcement, social services, and foster care, with particularly dire consequences for rural and underserved communities. Turning the tide on the opioid epidemic will require a coordinated and aggressive response across all levels of government. It is important to act swiftly in addressing this national emergency by providing additional resources and taking the steps outlined below. Recognizing that government cannot tackle this issue alone, county leaders are also calling upon private sector partners, including, but not limited to, manufacturers, pharmacies, and health care providers to be part of the solution.

Public Safety, Health, and Human Services (continued)

Ongoing Support for Comprehensive State and Local Efforts

- Provide ongoing supplemental funding to help states and communities turn the tide on the substance use disorder epidemic.
- Continue support for local and state efforts to reduce dependence on opioids and all other addictive substances, overdoses, and fatalities by providing additional emergency supplemental funding through existing federal grant programs.

- Support continued legislation, like the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0 (CARA 2.0) that aims to stem the substance use disorder crisis by providing federal support for local efforts to curb substance abuse. Programs authorized by CARA should be broadened in scope in eligible activities and fully funded through the annual appropriations process to provide local communities the resources they need to fight the substance abuse crisis.

Preventing & Identifying Addiction

- Improve provider education and training on pain management and safe opioid prescribing.
- Improve access to, and encourage the manufacturing and evaluation of, abuse-deterrent formulations (ADFs) of opioid painkillers.

Disaster Preparedness, Community Resiliency, and Emergency Management

Strong emergency management and preparedness are crucial to ensuring our communities can protect from and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, which are occurring with increasing frequency and severity.

Lack of personnel is Washington State's biggest gap in emergency management. Only eight out of 39 counties have at least one full-time emergency manager. The other 31 counties have an emergency manager who is part-time, meaning that the emergency manager is also responsible for many other duties and cannot make this their sole focus.

Federal grants provide the majority of funds for county preparedness offices and additional support is needed to maximize federal investment.

- The criteria for FEMA Individual Assistance must be modified to ensure rural residents are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. FEMA should immediately pursue a change to its policies to allow communities impacted by wildfires access to the agency's Individual Assistance Programs. Current FEMA criteria requiring "concentration of damage" unfairly denies Individual Assistance to rural residents with

- Support pharmacies and law enforcement agencies in establishing and expanding permanent take back programs for disposing of unneeded controlled substances.

Expanding Access to Treatment & Recovery

- Develop additional guidance regarding best practices for addiction treatment and the distribution of MAT.
- Permanently eliminate the IMD exclusion to help provide the long-term certainty that states, counties, non-governmental organizations, and private providers must fully expand access to inpatient treatment for Medicaid enrollees with an SUD.

Enhancing Support for Law Enforcement

- Reinstate equitable sharing payments under the Department of Justice (DOJ) Asset Forfeiture Program.
- Expand the federal Heroin Response Strategy to support coordination among regional High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs) and a public health-public safety approach to combatting all illegal trafficking of addictive substances.

losses from flooding, landslides, earthquakes, and catastrophic fires.

- Support H.R. 3917 the MALDEN Act introduced by Rep. McMorris-Rodgers which would amend the Stafford Act to:
 - Require the president to approve or deny a disaster declaration request within 30 days. If the request is not denied within 30 days, then it is approved.
 - Ensure rural communities receive recovery assistance by requiring FEMA to work in coordination with state leadership to provide guidance to local emergency managers on developing a recovery team. They must also assist to identify short and long-term recovery resources, including resources to prevent secondary natural disasters like flooding, mudslides and rockslides.
 - Instruct FEMA to work with the state emergency management agency to make disaster case workers available for rural communities in the event that a request for Individual Assistance is made and denied.

- **Increase and Adjust Match for Emergency Management Preparedness Grants (EMPG).** EMPGs are flexible funds which most Washington counties use to fund staffing positions and directly meet the needs of their local jurisdictions. EMPGs currently require a 1:1 match. Many smaller counties must return funds every year because their jurisdictions cannot match the full amount of federal funds. Changing to a .50/1 match would help those smaller counties maximize federal dollars, increasing the total amount of EMPG would also help counties fund much-needed staffing positions.
- **Deliver FEMA Personal Assistance (PA) Grants to states as Block Grants.** Currently, individuals must apply directly to FEMA for grants, the process for which is cumbersome for both applicants and administrators. Further, applications are often slowed by conflicts between state and local requirements that vary from federal requirements. Delivering block grants directly to states would allow states to tailor PA grants to state needs in accordance with federal requirements and accelerate the process. Consider a 1:1 match with states to incentivize state participation in the process.
- **Create personal grants/loans through Small Business Administration to support emergency management planning in businesses.** Many employers want to plan, but do not have the capacity to do so. Resilient businesses, especially large businesses, will improve disaster outcomes at the county level.
- **Develop personnel grants with federal agencies other than FEMA.** FEMA is crucially important to disaster preparedness, but is not the only federal agency with a nexus to planning and preparation. Army Corps of Engineers could create grants to fund flood mitigation experts; BLM could support wildfire mitigation specialists; and HHS could help counties pay for evacuation and sheltering experts.
- **Transportation risk tax .001 cent.** Consider a transportation risk tax of .001 cent, applicable to every gallon of hazardous material that passes on federal roads, delivered directly to the counties through which the hazard passes.

To make counties more resilient to the potential impacts of climate change, we ask Congress to:

- Invest in infrastructure to protect against drought and floods and to expand weatherization capabilities;
- Invest in research and development for advanced transmission and electricity distribution technologies and promote smart grid technologies that deliver flexibility and resilience for communities; and
- Invest in demonstration projects and research hubs for next generation technologies like advanced nuclear reactors, carbon capture, and clean hydrogen.

National Weather Service – Coverage Gap

The National Weather Service has a gap in coverage along the eastern slopes of the Cascades and part of the Columbia Basin extending from the Canadian border in Okanogan County south into Klickitat County (portions of seven counties). WSAC supports the provision of resources (estimated at \$400,000) to complete a feasibility study as a first step in attempting to fill the weather radar gap and give the National Weather Service the opportunity to alert communities when potentially devastating weather events are approaching and/or occurring.

Air Ambulance

Rural, remote, and island counties in Washington State depend on air ambulances as the fastest way to get patients that need emergency services, trauma care, and access to burn units. Yet, air ambulance availability and the denial of coverage by insurance companies is a growing crisis limiting this important service. Additionally, the need for air ambulances is compounded by the growing reduction of services in rural hospitals.

The feasibility study intends to identify strategic locations to place weather observation/prediction technologies and equipment in the region. This will also aid in addressing fire suppression efforts and providing emergency notifications of post-wildfire flood events that directly affect communities throughout the state.

WSAC supports the following as two mechanisms by which Congress can ensure access, affordability, and insurance coverage of this important emergency service:

- S 1895, Lower Care Costs Act; and
- H.R. 3784, The Air Ambulance Affordability Act.

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Courthouse Briefing Document 2022

- ADAMS
- ASOTIN
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- COWLITZ
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- KITTITAS
- Klickitat
- LEWIS
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- PACIFIC
- PEND OREILLE
- PIERCE
- SAN JUAN
- SKAGIT
- SKAMANIA
- SNOHOMISH
- SPOKANE
- STEVENS
- THURSTON
- WAHKIAKUM
- WALLA WALLA
- WHATCOM
- WHITMAN
- YAKIMA

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Who We Are

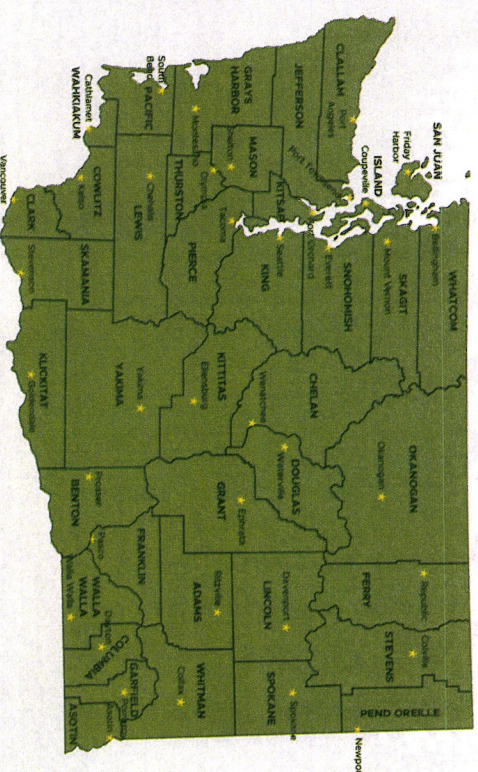
The Voice of Washington Counties

Created in 1906, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) serves the counties of Washington State. Members include elected county commissioners, councilmembers, and executives from all of Washington's 39 counties. WSAC provides a variety of services to its member counties, including advocacy, professional development, public-private business partnerships, and a forum to network and share best practices.

While voting within the organization is limited to county commissioners, council members, and county executives, the Association also serves as an umbrella organization for affiliate organizations representing:

- County Road Engineers
- Local Public Health Officials
- County Administrators
- Solid Waste Managers
- County Human Service Administrators
- IT Directors
- Planning Directors
- Clerks of County Boards

WSAC also works closely with its sister organization, the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO), which serves independently elected non-judicial county officials, including assessors, auditors, treasurers, prosecutors, coroners, clerks, and sheriffs.



2021-22 WSAC Board of Directors



PRESIDENT
Jamie Stephens
San Juan County



FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Mary Kunev
Spokane County



SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
Lisa Janicki
Skagit County



IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Michael Largent
Whitman County

The WSAC Board of Directors is responsible for the general supervision over the affairs of the Association per WSAC Bylaws and adopted policies and procedures.

2021-22 Activities

- Reviewed amicus filing requests and authorized participation
- Authorized filings and appeals of pending litigation
- Authorized and Monitor Indigent Defense Litigation
- Authorized and Monitor Blake Decision Litigation
- Appointments to Statewide Boards and Commissions
- Program Review and Oversight
- Develop and monitor Objective and Key Results for 2022-23
- Review and Approve 2020 Financials
- Review Organizational Culture and Values
- Appoint Legislative Steering Committee Members
- Appoint Federal Issue and Relations Committee Members
- Association Management in a COVID-19 Environment
- Review and Recommend Annual Budget and Program Expenditures, Dues, and Assessments
- Monitoring WSAC Financial Health

2022 Regular Board Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, February 2, 2022, Thurston County
- Wednesday, May 11, 2022, Pierce County
- Thursday, September 22, 2022, Kittitas County
- Tuesday, November 15, 2022, King County

Columbia River Caucus

The Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program was initiated by the Legislature in 2006. The purpose of the program is to seek out and develop new water supply in eastern Washington. New water supplies are intended for both in-stream and out-of-stream use; water from projects funded by the program are allocated 1/3 for in-stream use and 2/3 for out-of-stream use.

WSAC receives funding from the Department of Ecology to provide staff support to eastern Washington county commissioners. This allows commissioners to participate as full partners in the program. The commissioners meet quarterly as the Columbia River Caucus.

2021-22 Activities

- Monitoring and engaging in deliberations/negotiations on the Columbia River Treaty.
- Ensure counties have a voice in Ecology's management of the Columbia River Water Supply Program.
- Quarterly meetings of the Commissioners Policy Advisory Group (PAG) continue to be held and are vital in ensuring a flow of information both to county commissioners and from them to the CR-PAG and the Department of Ecology.
- Regular discussions and meetings with the Director of the Office of the Columbia River occur several times a year.
- Support CR Water Supply Program resources and funding.
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive training program for new Caucus members.



21
Counties
Involved

Wes McCart, Chair
Stevens County
Commissioner

Paul Jewell
Policy Director

Timber and Public Lands Program

The timber counties program works diligently to support, advocate for, and represent our member counties with interests in timberland management issues. This includes counties that are beneficiaries of state forestlands and counties with other private, state, and federal forestlands utilized for commercial timber harvest, conservation, recreation, and other purposes.

2021-22 Activities

- Reviewing, monitoring and commenting on the scoping process for DNR's sustainable harvest calculation. Mark Rasmussen, a contractor, represents WSAC on the Sustainable Harvest Calculation Technical Advisory Committee.
- Representing counties in Timber, Fish and Wildlife Principles Meeting.
- Completed the Marbled Murrelet Economic Impact Study and presented its findings at a joint legislative committee work session.
- Mark Meleason, a contractor, continues to represent WSAC on the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review (CMER) Committee.
- Court Stanley, WSAC Program Consultant, represent WSAC on the TFW Policy Committee and monitors the activities of the adaptive management program.
- Forest land management and policy issues training program planned for Spring 2022.
- Continued development of strategies that respond to the Marbled Murrelet Economic Impact Study findings.
- Continued work to follow up with DNR on the trust lands performance assessment.
- Monitoring and providing feedback as DNR begins its ten-year sustainable harvest calculation process.



39
Counties
Involved

Tom Lannen, Chair
Skamania County
Commissioner

Paul Jewell
Policy Director

Court Stanley
Program Consultant

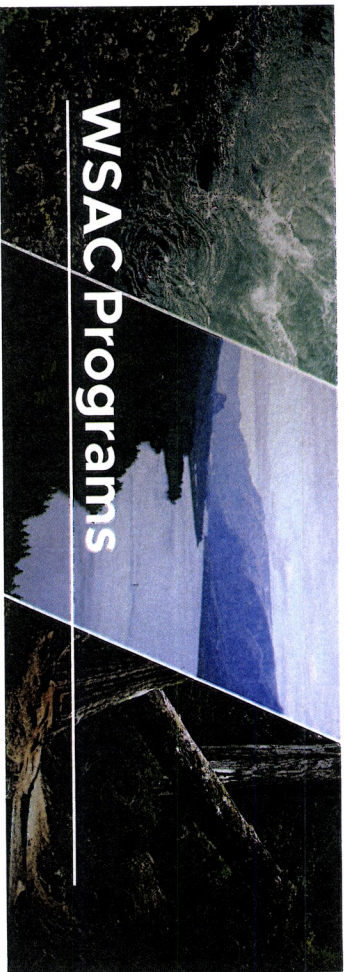
Mark Meleason
Program Consultant

BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Gelder	Kitsap County
Scott Hutsell	Lincoln County
Stephanie Wright	Snohomish County
Dave Sauter	Klickitat County
Wes McCart	Stevens County
Chris Branch	Okanogan County
LaDon Linde	Yakima County
Art Swannack	Whitman County
Vickie Raines	Grays Harbor County
Nate Nehring	Snohomish County
Mark Ozas	Clallam County
Dennis Weber	Cowlitz County
Dow Constantine	King County
Joe McDermott	King County
Ryan Mello	Pierce County
Megan Dunn	Snohomish County
Josh Kerns	Spokane County
Karen Bowerman	Clark County
Tye Menser	Thurston County
Charlotte Garrido	Kitsap County
Annanda McKinney	Yakima County
Satpal Sidhu	Whatcom County
Will McKay	Benton County
Chris Seibert	Asotin County
Brad Peck	Franklin County
Christine Minney	San Juan County
Temple Lentz	Clark County
Reagan Dunn	King County
Derek Young	Pierce County
Jared Mead	Snohomish County
Al French	Spokane County
Gary Medwig	Clark County
Gary Edwards	Thurston County
Ron Anderson	Yakima County
Kaylee Galloway	Whatcom County
Jerome Delvin	Benton County

ALTERNATES

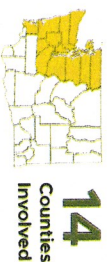
Chris Seibert	Asotin County
Brad Peck	Franklin County
Christine Minney	San Juan County
Temple Lentz	Clark County
Reagan Dunn	King County
Derek Young	Pierce County
Jared Mead	Snohomish County
Al French	Spokane County
Gary Medwig	Clark County
Gary Edwards	Thurston County
Ron Anderson	Yakima County
Kaylee Galloway	Whatcom County
Jerome Delvin	Benton County



WSAC Programs

Counties Coastal Caucus

The Washington State Association of Counties created the Coastal Counties Caucus, comprised of 14 counties bordering Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Pacific Ocean, shortly before the creation of the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) in 2007. The Caucus creates a forum for counties to interact, engage, and recommend WSAC positions on issues relating to the waters of Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Pacific Ocean. The program also supports members of the Puget Sound Partnership's Ecosystem Coordination Board and Salmon Recovery Council, both of which have county elected official representation. The Caucus works to ensure coastal county interests and priorities are brought forward to the Legislative Steering Committee, state and federal agencies, tribal nations, and other key stakeholders.



Ron Wessen, Chair
Skagit County
Commissioner

Brynn Brady
Program Consultant

2021-22 Activities

- Support WSAC members serving on Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Boards, Councils and Committees
- Coordinate representation in PSP meetings and other state efforts that impact communities along the Puget Sound and Pacific coast
- Ensure county policy interests are considered in the 2022-2026 PSP Action Agenda Update
- Supporting input and comment on Maritime Washington National Heritage Area Draft Management Plan.
- Monitoring and providing input to the Ecosystem Coordination Board's Land Use Subcommittee to better understand land use decisions that impact or enhance salmon recovery efforts. Specifically, they have identified the following for taking a leadership role:
 - **Monitoring and communicating to Coastal Counties about work plan priorities being planned for the Salmon Recovery Council, including:**
 - Determining whether existing Chinook recovery priorities are the most effective and efficient means of advancing salmon recovery efforts and revising them if necessary.
 - Advancing policy recommendations articulated in the Chinook Implementation Strategy (Bold Actions) as a means of accelerating Puget Sound salmon recovery efforts
 - Processing and understanding the results of State/Tribal Riparian Work Group and assist implementation where appropriate
 - Leveraging existing funding sources by pursuing enhancements and better integration of salmon recovery priorities



Letter from Executive Director Eric Johnson

On Friday, May 18, 1984, my golden retriever Brubaker and I strode up to open the gates of Lewis County's Mayfield Lake County Park – starting my career and affinity for County Government. If that had been 2022, I would have taken a selfie!! Sixteen years later, after being elected as a County Commissioner, I felt the same exhilaration, sense of responsibility, and frankly, awe to serve, as I took the steps to enter the Historic Lewis County Courthouse.

Now I sit at my desk in Thurston County, fortunate to serve hundreds of county elected officials and hundreds of county department heads, managers, and staff who deliver programs and services that are critical in the daily lives of our county residents.

One thing for me that has changed in the last 40 years of public service though is *The Degree of Difficulty*:

“Degree of difficulty is a concept used in several sports and other competitions to indicate the technical difficulty of a skill, performance, or course, often as a factor in scoring.”

In watching the Olympics this year, I thought about how your success as county elected and appointed officials is measured based on your execution and performance, and the public does not really give a hoot about any “degree of difficulty.” Yet I think there is one significant difference between the issues and challenges today’s county elected and appointed officials face when compared to those of past: *The Degree of Difficulty*.

This is a 40 year personal professional reflection, affirmed by conversations that I have had with other colleagues, that I believe you each face unprecedented challenges as county elected and appointed officials. It is hard to fathom the complexity of the myriad of issues counties have faced over just the past two years. It has never been more challenging to be a public administrator or elected official. One silver lining is that county revenue is as strong for county government as it has been since the lost days of federal timber harvesting, federal revenue sharing, sales tax equalization, MVET for criminal justice and public health, and a 6% annual property tax increase limit!

While Counties’ response to the COVID-19 Pandemic has dominated our Association work since February 2020, it does not solely reflect the depth of activities for the organization. Yet without question, aiding counties’ response to and recovery from the pandemic and understanding the use Coronavirus Relief Funds and now American Rescue Plan Act funding has dominated our work and support for counties. Additionally, we continue to work in these core program areas:

- **Association public policy development:**
 - Transportation Funding
 - Tax Reform
 - GMA Reform
 - Forest Resources and Public Lands
 - Criminal Justice Reform
 - Blake Decision Implementation
 - Foundational Public Health Services/System Structure
 - Public and Behavioral Health
 - Housing and Homelessness

- Developing and planning to implement 2022-23 Organizational Goals, Objectives, and Actions.
- Advocacy, coordination, communication, and representation with the legislature and executive branch agencies/offices.
- Changing the manner that we deliver meetings, trainings and conferences from in-person to virtual and from virtual to hybrid and returning to in-person.
- Broadening our communication activities to keep our members and affiliates informed on issues relevant to county operations.
- Finding mechanisms to help the legislature, agencies/offices, and the public better understand county government.
- Represent county government in the judicial system.
- Manage and administer the business of the Association with integrity and efficiency.
- Perform affiliate management, coordination and communication.
- Provide training through County Development Institute, virtual assemblies, and a myriad of other workshops and online sessions.

I continue to be passionate about county government and the services that you all oversee and deliver. County government is the heart of a system of representative democracy where we elect our fellow residents to govern, administer, and legislate the programs and services that affect our everyday lives.

WSAC is fortunate to have a phenomenal set of leaders who I simply cannot thank enough:

WSAC President Jamie Stephens (San Juan County)
WSAC 1st Vice President Mary Kunej (Spokane County)
WSAC 2nd Vice President Lisa Janicki (Skagit County)
Immediate Past President Michael Largent (Whitman County)
Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chair Kate Dean (Jefferson County)
Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chair Brad Peck (Franklin County)

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or even praise about WSAC, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of your Association leaders or myself. Your WSAC staff is committed to serving you and working with each of you. We strive to serve you with integrity. We constantly remember to stay focused on executing our responsibilities to you with civility, thoughtfulness, professionalism, and respectful dialogue. It is an honor to serve you, the elected and appointed county officials whom the public has entrusted to lead county government in Washington State.



Eric Johnson
Executive Director, WSAC

NextEra Energy Resources

NextEra Energy Resources is America's premier clean energy leader and the world's largest producer of wind and solar energy. We develop, construct and operate power projects to produce electricity. Equally important, we are dedicated to quality, committed to environmental stewardship, and care about our communities.

Ufuoma Ojumah
Sr. Project Manager Development
ufuoma.ojumah@nexteraenergy.com
(979) 739-1311
nexteraenergyresources.com

SSC - Sanitary Service Company

SSC provides full service recycling and solid waste collection for residential and commercial customers. SSC works closely with Whatcom County on solid waste and recycling issues and provides services consistent with the County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan.

Ted Carlson
General Manager
ted@ssc-inc.com
(360) 738-7853
ssc-inc.com

cashVest by three+one

A liquidity data tool for the public sector & higher Ed to execute borrowing, investing, and cash management decisions with more confidence and greater ease. Because three+one is neither a bank nor a Registered Investment Advisor, we provide a pure and independent perspective on making certain every dollar you have is being put to work efficiently, every day.

Samantha Rothschild
Marketing Coordinator
sir@threeplusone.us
(585) 484-0311 (ext. 712)
threeplusone.us

Vector Payments

Our company brings decades of payments experience to further help local businesses apart of the WSAC network with the guaranteed lowest overall cost commitment including offers at 0% cost to you, best equipment available, and 24/7 personal support to ensure credit card processing is NEVER a pain point anymore.

Ryan Mirpanah
Managing Partner
ryan@vectorpayments.com
(617) 681-0210
vectorpayments.com

Waste Connections

Waste Connections is one of the largest full-service provider of solid waste collection, providing non-hazardous solid waste collection, recycling and landfill disposal services to commercial, industrial, municipal and residential customers. Waste Connections is the third largest solid waste management company in North America with a network of operations in 41 states and 6 provinces.

Mark Gingrich
Division Vice President
mark.gingrich@wasteconnections.com
(253) 240-0655
wasteconnections.com

WCIF - Washington Counties Insurance Fund

WCIF was established in 1958 by the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) to provide more cost-efficient health benefits for county employees. WCIF is a public non-profit multiple employer benefit trust (501 C9) that provides health and welfare benefits for the employees of counties and other publicly funded entities. WCIF currently provides services to over 100 participating employers within the State of Washington.

Bobby Jackson
Executive Director
bobby@wcif.net
(360) 292-4475
wcif.net



Business Partner Directory
wsac.org/businesspartners

Washington counties are engaged in delivering a broad range of services from public health and safety to road construction, environmental mitigation, and social services. With over 35,000 employees serving over 7.5 million residents, counties are looking to private and nonprofit sectors for innovation and solutions to improve their performance. Learn more about these services and how they can help improve service delivery and benefits to your county.



Liberty Mutual Insurance

Through your affiliation with WSAC, this exclusive program gives your county a competitive edge and your employees an exclusive group discount on auto, home, and other lines of personal insurance. Plus, with Liberty Mutual's onsite educational events, you can deliver the tools your employees need to stay safe and secure in your workplace.

Vicki Haworth

Lead Sales Representative
vicki.haworth@libertymutual.com
(360) 705-0600
libertymutual.com

Live Healthy Prescription

The NACO Prescription Discount Card is provided to you in a joint effort of your local county government and the National Association of Counties (NACO). Any county resident without prescription coverage can use this program. Even if you have prescription insurance coverage, you may still benefit from the discount card since it may save you money on prescriptions your existing plan does not cover.

John Losh

Member Outreach Manager
jlosh@naco.org
(202) 661-8832
nacohealth.org

NACO - National Association of Counties

The National Association of Counties Financial Services Corporation (NACO FSC) leverages NACO's networks, evaluates emerging market county needs and establishes sustainable, cost-saving and value-added solutions that can be applied nationwide. By providing quality solutions, we strive to develop and maintain healthy, vibrant and safe counties across the United States.

Paul Terragno

Managing Director
pterragno@naco.org
(202) 942-4228
naco.org

Nationwide

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Since its inception in 1980, NACO's Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees.

Kristopher Morton

Program Director
k.morton@nationwide.com
(614) 398-7184
nrsforu.com

Coronavirus Pandemic: Assisting Counties Respond

wsac.org/recovery

Public health has been a core function of County Government for decades, initially focusing on the spread of contagious diseases, sanitation, and preventing infectious diseases. Now, our County Commissioners/Councilmembers serve on our 35 Local Boards of Health that oversee our local public health departments that deliver crucial on-the-scene services and programs and implement the goals of Foundational Public Health Services. This pandemic has taught us how important public health preparedness is and the role WSAC and our partner affiliate, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO), can play in being a convener and communicator. As counties continue to lead the pandemic response and recovery, WSAC is focused on disseminating useful information to our members and facilitating the exchange of effective strategies and approaches. Hundreds of county leaders joined WSAC's weekly Virtual Assembly where they had an opportunity to hear directly from the state agencies and statewide elected officials.

2021-22 Virtual Assembly Guests Have Included:

- Governor's Office Staff
- Department of Health
- Department of Commerce
- State Auditor
- National Association of Counties
- Redistricting Commission
- State Board of Health – 1152 Implementation
- Attorney General
- Association of Washington Business
- Public Utility Districts
- Non-Profit Groups
- Guidelines, metrics, phased re-opening plans
- Orders and proclamations
- OPMA/PRA Orders
- Coronavirus Relief Funds for counties under 500,000 in population
- American Rescue Plan Coordination

Throughout the pandemic, WSAC has held regular calls with the Governor's Office to advise on the following:

PROVIDED SUPPORT TO THE FOLLOWING COUNTY LEADERS

- Commissioners, Councilmembers, and Executives
- Public Health Officials
- Administrators
- Solid Waste Managers
- Regional/County Planning Directors
- Engineers/Public Works Directors
- IT Directors
- Human Services Directors
- Clerks of the Board/Councils

Administration & Finance

The Finance and Administration department is responsible for the financial functions of WSAC, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, reporting, budgeting, contracts, grants, federal and state tax reporting, payroll, and benefits. The Finance and Administration department is also responsible for the management and financial functions of the Washington Counties Building.

Staff

Bridget Lockling
Director, Finance and Administration

Lynn Florillo-Lowe
Operations and Support Assistant

Jessica Strozewski
Operations Coordinator



Provides financial services for **6 associations**



Oversees nearly **\$5 million** in deposits and disbursements



Produces **20 sets** of financial statements and coordinates **4 tax returns**

2022 Action Items

- 1 Bi-annual audit for 2020-2021.
- 2 Streamline internal controls and procedures.
- 3 Review dues structure and evaluate methodologies.
- 4 Formalize financial reserves and investment policies.



COUNTY LEADERS

2022 COUNTY LEADERS

WORKING TOGETHER

NOVEMBER 14-16

HYATT REGENCY | RENTON, WA
LAKE WASHINGTON | KING COUNTY

HOSTED BY WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION / COUNTIES

REGISTER NOW!

VISIT COUNTYLEADERS.ORG



County Development
Institute of Washington

Leadership. Growth. Collaboration.

Learn More - cdiwa.org

Communications & Member Services

The Communications and Member Services Division oversees all external and internal communications and public-private partnerships that provide cost-saving services to counties. The department also produces in-person, hybrid, and virtual conferences that provide members and affiliates with networking and professional development opportunities.

2022 Action Items

- 1 Create multi-year marketing campaign for #WanderCounties. Utilize digital channels to engage WSAC members and affiliates in sharing their pride in their counties and highlighting the critical work they do.
- 2 Relaunch WSAC Business Partners Program in partnership with affiliates to build greater awareness and increase benefits for member counties.
- 3 Officially launch Washington Counties Job Board as a paid platform within the second quarter of 2022.
- 4 Finalize the first round of training and education videos for the County Development Institute of WA. Develop specialized add-on trainings to enhance the learning portfolio.

Staff

Bridget Locking
Director, Finance and Administration

Tyler Melhart
Graphic/Web Design Manager

Mitch Netzer
Communications Manager

Jessica Strozewski
Operations Coordinator

2021 ENGAGEMENT

Twitter
1,949 followers
3% increase from 2020

Facebook
2,828 page likes
8.5% increase from 2020
25,000 User Impressions
Facebook post reach

Website
96,000 website visitors

Email
40+ COVID-19 News Emails

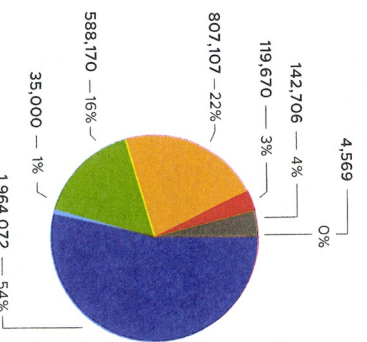
2021 Summary Financials

By The Numbers

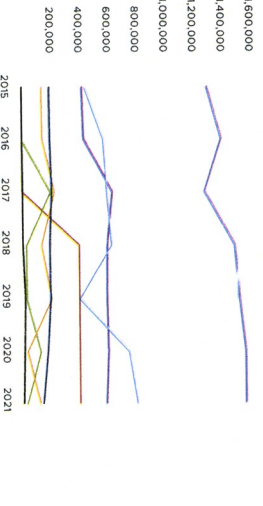
WHERE WSAC REVENUES COME FROM

Total Revenues — \$3,661,294

WSAC has a strong compliment of other funding sources to cover operating costs



7 YEAR REVENUE TRENDS



DUES AS PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE

Year	Dues as Percentage of Revenue
2015	52%
2016	49%
2017	43%
2018	54%
2019	56%
2020	54%
2021	54%

\$183,560 ▲

INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM 2020

\$191,387 ▲

INCREASE IN NET INCOME FROM 2020

27% ▲

INCREASE IN NET ASSETS SINCE 2016

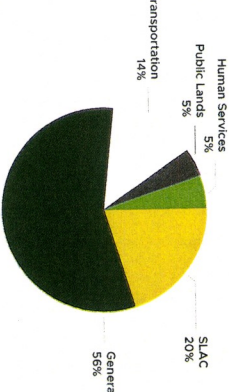
\$883,766

SPECIAL FUND CASH BALANCE

\$179,275

SLAC FUND CASH BALANCE

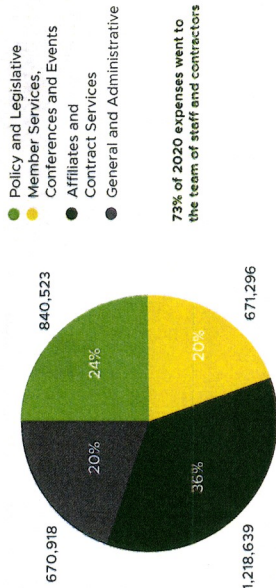
2021 DUES REVENUE BY TYPE



WSAC collects dues to support 5 main programs. Also collects assessments for 3 other special projects.

WHERE SPENDING OCCURS

Total Expenditure — \$3,401,376



73% of 2020 expenses went to the team of staff and contractors



SUPPORTING COUNTIES YOUR TEAM OF EXPERTS

- 6.7 FTE – Policy, Government, Legal
- 4.1 FTE – Member Services, Communication, Marketing
- 2.1 FTE – Administrative, Financial, Logistics
- 6 Contracted Professionals – 13 Services Contracts



LITIGATION

Tackling the legal issues most important to you

- \$220k legal defense and consultation
- \$29k for Blake Litigation efforts
- 2 Trials and 1 Amicus Brief



COMMUNICATION

Marketing the stories and messages that matter

- \$34k media, marketing and brand awareness
- National County Government week campaign
- Weekly virtual assembly learning opportunities



CONFERENCE

Training & educating county leaders

- In-Person County Leaders Conference held in Spokane
- 200+ Attendees and vendors
- Over \$39k in sponsorships

Amicus Briefs

Amicus Curiae Briefs are a means to provide information to the court on a particular aspect of the case or point of law in an attempt to help the court make a determination on the matter. Over the past several years, WSAC has worked with counsel and county prosecuting attorneys to submit briefs on issues important to county government including:

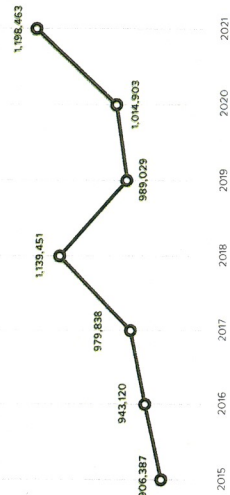
- Personnel and Labor
- Public Works Liability
- Law Enforcement and Public Safety
- Public Health
- Corrections, Jails and Medical Costs
- Land Use and Zoning
- Taxation, Fees and Charges
- Public Records
- Franchise Agreements
- Juror Pay
- Public Health Responsibilities
- Trial Court Indigent Defense
- County Charter
- Constitutional and Administrative Authorities for County Elected Officials

NET INCOME & CASH RESERVES

2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015

Year	Net Income	Cash
2015	85,432	502,796
2016	106,118	646,280
2017	82,778	851,196
2018	238,782	749,561
2019	(88,178)	651,808
2020	68,532	661,591
2021 Budget	59,919	878,586

Net Asset increases in 2018 and 2021 were mainly a result of savings from staffing vacancies. The other years show stability as the budget is balanced.



Litigation & Amicus

In 2018, the WSAC Membership established the Strategic Litigation, Advocacy, and Communication (SLAC) Program designed to use legal actions as an effective tool to advance the WSAC policy agenda in coordination with legislative advocacy strategies and actions. WSAC's legal actions are used sparingly and as a last resort.

Current Litigation Activities

Indigent Defense

The WSAC Board of Directors voted unanimously during their May 5, 2021, regular meeting to concur with the findings provided by the WSAC Legal Committee and Legislative Steering Committee that there are merits and reasonable grounds to support a legal challenge to require the State to fully fund constitutionally required trial court indigent defense services and authorized a legal challenge. WSAC anticipates filing this legal complaint sometime in 2022. To date, three counties, Kitsap, Yakima, and Lincoln have joined as co-plaintiffs. A variety of legal analysis and budget documentation is underway.

Blake Decision

On October 3, 2021, WSAC formally joined 21 Counties as a co-plaintiff against the State to establish that the State is solely responsible for all costs associated with implementing the Blake Decision, including the cost of vacations, re-sentencing, and for all Legal Financial Obligation (LFO) refunds. The desired outcome is a declaration from the court that the State is required to indemnify counties for all Blake expenses, including all LFO refunds and the administrative costs to implement this Washington State Supreme Court decision (judicial, clerk, prosecutor, public defense, administration and operations) that counties will incur in implementing the Blake Decision. Negotiations are occurring with the Attorney General's Office and legislation was introduced to establish a program for reimbursement to counties and individuals who paid LFOs.

Unfunded Mandate

WSAC, with co-plaintiffs Whiteman, Snohomish, and Kittitas County, filed a complaint with the King County Superior Court to hold Senate Bill 5472 (Ballot Drop Box Bill) is a violation of RCW 43.135.060. Prohibition of new or extended programs without full reimbursement. On October 14, 2020, Judge Lee ruled that SB 5472, which mandated County Auditors to significantly increase the number of ballot drop boxes statewide at an estimated capital cost of over one million dollars plus yearly operating and maintenance costs, "is an unfunded mandate pursuant to RCW 43.135.060." The state appealed and on January 27, 2022, the Washington State Supreme Court issued their ruling:

- RCW 29A.04.430 was the controlling statute for election cost reimbursement and not the unfunded mandate statute, RCW 43.135.060.
- Counties are entitled to reimbursement only for the State's proportional share of costs.
- The 2020 legislative amendments to RCW 29A.04.430 do not violate Article II, Section 37.
- Counties do not have a vested right to full reimbursement (even though costs were incurred).
- Case is remanded to King County Superior Court for further proceedings.

Advocacy

The Legislative Advocacy & Policy Division supports one of WSAC's primary goals:

to advocate on behalf of counties at the state legislature, regulatory agencies, and executive branch offices in support of sound policy and fiscal strategies that sustain the basic government services that ensure the health and safety of all Washingtonians.

2022 Action Items

- 1 Work with the state legislature to make progress on shared priorities in the 2022 legislative session.
- 2 Assist counties with state and federal COVID response, including federal funding allocations.
- 3 Develop 2023-24 biennial legislative agenda.



The 60-day 2022 Legislative Session was a tough one this year. It was the second year in a remote-only format and tackled issues substantially more appropriate for a 105-day session. The self-imposed limitations on bill introductions from last year was nowhere to be seen this year. While the Legislature only passed 340 bills in 2021's 105-day session, they still passed just over 300 bills this year. Less than the historical average, but high for a Zoom-based short session full of weighty topics.



60-day sessions in the second year of the biennium are designed to be supplemental to the initial 105-day session, addressing necessary caseload and budget adjustments. This year, however, the Legislature passed a \$64 billion operating budget, which was \$2 billion more than what the governor proposed and a full \$5 billion more than the budget they passed just one year ago.



In addition to passing a historically large operating budget, the Legislature did one other thing no one expected them to – they managed to pass a \$17 billion, 16-year transportation package. The so-called Move Ahead WA package invests heavily in ferries, transit, preservation and maintenance, and more. It allocates \$80 million over the 16 years to the County Road Administration Board for local preservation.

Staff

Jaime Boddien
Managing Director,
WSALPHO

Axel Swanson
Managing Director, WSACE

Travis Dutton
Policy Analyst

Chris Goodwin
FPHS Policy Advisor

Paul Jewell
Policy Director

Juliana Roe
Policy Director

Curtis Steinhauer
Policy Analyst

Brianna Steere
FPHS Policy Advisor

Mike Hoover
Policy Consultant

Legislative Steering Committee

The Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) is responsible for preparing and recommending a proposed legislative agenda for the review and approval of the active WSAC members. The LSC monitors the events of each legislative session and is empowered to adopt policy relating to legislation, executive branch policies and operations, and the activities of other organizations and associations.

2022 Action Items

- 1 Meet virtually every week during the legislative session to review and take positions on critical legislation affecting counties.
- 2 Engage with leaders from state agencies and the Legislature to keep them apprised of county priorities.
- 3 Develop the legislative agenda for the 2023-24 biennium.

LSC ROSTER

Dan Blankenship Adams County	Derek Gianakakis Ferry County	Robert Gelder Kitsap County	Derek Young Pierce County Council	Al French Spokane County
Chris Sauter Asotin County	Brad Peck Franklin County	Laura Osadacz Kittitas County	Ryan Mello Pierce County Council	Wes McCart Stevens County
Jerome Delvin Benton County	Jim Nelson Garfield County	David Sauter Kittitas County	Bruce Dammeyer Pierce County Executive	Carolina Mella Thurston County
Kevin Overbay Chelan County	Rob Jones Grant County	Lindsey Pollock Lewis County	Janie Stephens San Juan County	Lee Tischer Wahkiakum County
Bill Peach Chelan County	Vickie Raines Grays Harbor County	Scott Hutsell Lincoln County	Lisa Janicki Skagit County	Greg Tompkins Walla Walla County
Gary Medvoly Clark County	Jill Johnson Island County	Sharon Trask Mason County	Bob Hamlin Skamania County	Kayla Galloway Whatcom County Council
Charles Amerlein Columbia County	Kate Dean Jefferson County	Chris Branch Okanogan County	Megan Dunn Shenandoah County Council	Satpal Sidhu Whatcom County Executive
Dennis Weber Cowlitz County	Joe McDermott King County Council	Lisa Olsen Pacific County	Dave Somers Shenandoah County Executive	Art Swannack Whitman County
Dan Sutton Douglas County	Dow Constantine King County Executive	John Gentle Pend Oreille County		Ananda McKinney Yakima County

Preparing for 2023

To develop the legislative agenda for the 2023-24 biennial legislative sessions, the LSC will:

- Convene a Virtual Assembly to identify emerging priorities and otherwise informally survey members and affiliates.
- Convene a planning meeting for the LSC in May to narrow the priorities.
- Assess the priorities and their alignment with economic and political realities.
- Seek approval of the agenda from WSAC membership.

2022 FEDERAL ISSUES AND RELATIONS COMMITTEE



39 Counties Involved

Kate Dean,
Co-Chair
Jefferson County
Commissioner

Brad Peck,
Co-Chair
Franklin County
Commissioner

Rob Gelder, Chair Kitsap County Commissioner	Temple Lentz Clark County Councilmember	Janet St. Clair Island County Commissioner	Scott Hutsell Lincoln County Commissioner	Tom Lannen Skamania County Commissioner
Dan Blankenship Adams County Commissioner	Dennis Weber Cowlitz County Commissioner	Laura Osadacz Kittitas County Commissioner	Sharon Trask Stevens County Commissioner	Wes McCart Stevens County Commissioner
Bob Bugert Chelan County Commissioner	Brad Peck Franklin County Commissioner	Lindsey Pollock Lewis County Commissioner	Derek Young Pierce County Councilmember	Eric Johnson Executive Director
Jerome Delvin Benton County Commissioner	Danny Stone Grant County Commissioner			

Public Land Payments

County	SRS/Fed FY 2020	PILT/Fed FY 2021	Dept of Energy FY 2020	Refuge (RRSA) Federal	DFW PILT 2020-2022	DNR PILT FY 2021	DNR PILT 6 Yr Annual Avg	Total	% of Total Revenue
Adams	-	60,271	-	6,176	3,597	971	-	71,015	0.06%
Asotin	59,541	179,073	-	498	48,261	-	-	287,374	0.26%
Benton	-	184,224	858,544	6,404	-	-	-	1,049,172	0.95%
Chelan	1,040,503	3,352,067	-	11,315	54,978	9,855	-	4,468,717	4.03%
Clallam	782,914	1,155,238	-	7,855	-	5,412	5,746,334	7,697,752	6.94%
Clark	2,776	2,411	-	29,074	-	2,313	3,979,126	3,955,702	3.57%
Columbia	154,478	402,766	-	695	20,713	-	-	578,652	0.52%
Cowlitz	114,798	31,765	-	1,689	-	1,266	1,778,273	1,927,732	1.74%
Douglas	2	167,047	-	-	-	161	-	167,210	0.15%
Ferry	772,239	901,381	-	-	29,100	-	-	1,702,800	1.54%
Franklin	-	182,784	280,707	85	-	186	-	463,762	0.42%
Garfield	83,555	243,353	-	-	24,105	-	-	351,013	0.32%
Grant	-	804,652	643,642	5,947	37,443	278	-	1,491,962	1.35%
Grays Harbor	304,202	285,676	-	4,266	24,432	76,774	1,817,123	2,562,473	2.31%
Island	-	2,153	-	-	-	-	-	2,153	0.00%
Jefferson	794,102	1,643,245	-	26,490	-	91,306	1,909,383	4,464,526	4.03%
King	171,538	935,880	-	-	-	349,252	2,210,254	3,666,924	3.31%
Kitsap	604,649	1,205,311	-	-	542,783	52,892	905,231	968,123	0.86%
Kittitas	42,886	117,365	-	42,557	78,558	53,010	104,720	439,036	0.40%
Klickitat	1,559,064	687,075	-	237	-	2,185	7,937,784	10,186,345	9.18%
Lewis	-	255,152	-	-	13,642	353	-	269,126	0.24%
Litchia	-	331,886	-	-	-	22,190	4,662,881	5,316,796	4.79%
Mason	299,839	2,782,158	-	1,061	563,577	82,229	-	5,047,383	4.55%
Okanogan	1,618,363	7,419	-	66,368	-	29,505	2,231,761	2,335,453	2.11%
Pacific	629,807	1,190,789	-	412	20,004	-	-	1,841,072	1.66%
Pend Oreille	193,901	872,946	-	1,745	-	779	426,586	1,495,957	1.35%
Pierce	-	7,064	-	-	-	17,748	-	24,832	0.02%
San Juan	431,225	1,318,757	-	-	-	258,871	10,539,048	12,547,902	11.31%
Skagit	2,794,068	344,800	-	8,185	-	87,826	5,214,212	8,274,212	7.47%
Skamania	555,621	1,518,436	-	-	-	307,081	7,540,449	9,921,587	8.95%
Snohomish	300,478	5,893	-	53,421	-	21,783	-	81,097	0.07%
Spokane	960	653,286	-	164,652	-	3,080	89,443	1,270,939	1.09%
Stevens	-	1,268	-	20,130	-	106,450	5,785,583	5,914,391	5.33%
Thurston	-	-	-	15,077	-	5,803	1,735,454	1,756,333	1.58%
Wahkiakum	2,558	31,168	-	5,260	-	-	-	39,986	0.04%
Walla Walla	829,132	2,078,845	-	-	-	5,832	3,247,184	6,160,992	5.55%
Whatcom	-	61,223	-	-	-	-	-	61,223	0.06%
Whitman	1,110,173	941,596	-	7,130	491,623	23,162	-	2,573,684	2.32%
Yakima	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals:	15,253,371	24,946,423	1,762,893	486,729	2,002,896	1,876,453	64,565,952	110,914,711	100.00%

Federal Priorities

Learn more:
www.wsac.org/federal

The Washington State Association of Counties is engaged on federal policy development and advocacy pertaining to National Association of Counties (NACo) Resolutions, proposed federal legislation, agency actions as well as other federal issues and proposals that have direct implication and nexus to the operations and administration of county government in Washington State.

Federal Priorities

As part of WSAC Federal Policies and Positions, WSAC members adopted these 2022 Federal Priority Issues:

- COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Assistance and Public Health Support** – All counties, regardless of size and population, need access to additional direct, equitable, flexible, stable, and long-term funding to respond to this pandemic, rebuild the economy, and strengthen our communities. It is important that counties have a strong federal funding partner for local public health jurisdictions. Stable and consistent funding of key federal grants helps counties build resiliency in the event of health emergencies, outbreaks, economic changes, and natural disasters.
- Medicaid Inmate Exclusion** – Congress needs to reinstate federal health care benefits for non-convicted justice involved individuals. Congress must address the crisis caused by this callous Medicaid inmate exclusion policy that strips individuals who are still presumed innocent of their federal benefits.
- Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PLIT)** – This vital funding mechanism ensures counties receive property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. Full, predictable, and permanent mandatory funding for the PLIT programs is needed to assure counties receive a property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021, Washington's counties (37 of 39) received \$24.9 million in PLIT.
- Infrastructure** – Federal funding support for new and aging public infrastructure is needed to support a vibrant economy, public health and safety, and a sustainable environment. Washington State is expected to grow by two million residents in the next twenty years. It will take significant local, state, federal, and private infrastructure investment to sustain a strong, competitive economy with thriving communities.
- Secure Rural Schools (SRS)** – Permanent reauthorization and funding of the SPS program is important to Washington State counties. In FFY20, Washington's counties (27 of 39) received \$15.2 million in SPS funding, a decline from \$15.8 million in FFY 2019. We ask Congress to:
 - Repeal the 5% automatic reduction in payment
 - Restore full funding of SRS back to historic 25% funding level counties received with inflation built into the payment mechanism.
 - Provide for yearly election of Title VIII designation
 - Allow Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) appointments to be made at the regional or local forest level.
- Active Forest Management and Catastrophic Wildfires** – Congress and the Administration must act to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. A joint study conducted by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service, and The Nature Conservancy found that 2.7 million acres of eastern Washington forestland needs restoration. Federal lands account for 42 percent of the unhealthy forest identified. Policies and legislation, as well as pilot programs and projects, are needed to renew the federal government's commitment to manage federal forests for the benefit of counties containing federal forestland. Management should be conducted in a manner that produces a sustainable resource yield, improves forest health, protects the environment, and aids in the prevention of catastrophic wildfires.

Legislative Priorities

In Washington, state government's strength and the strength of the state's 39 counties are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. State government's success requires thriving, flexible, front-line implementation partners in counties. Counties' success requires an active, resourceful, supportive partner in state government. **Here's how Washington's 39 counties and Legislature can work together to make urgent progress on shared priorities in the 2022 Legislative Session:**

Responding to the COVID Crisis

Disease response.

Containment, and resiliency. Adequate funding for case investigation, vaccination, and public outreach/education, as well as for coordination of care for people isolated in quarantine who need support beyond testing. State and local communities must also look beyond the immediate needs of the pandemic to consider how to address inequities in health, access to critical services, and systemic discrimination by bolstering networks that include social services, behavioral health, businesses, public health, and health care.

Behavioral health.

Adequate funding for the behavioral health system, including jails. Mental health and substance use disorder treatment programs are essential county services. The pandemic has increased the need for care of those with mental health and substance use problems and those suffering from the psychosocial consequences of the pandemic. County jails inappropriately serve as substance use disorder and mental health institutions but are not designed or staffed to provide sufficient treatment.

Affordable housing.

New investment in stabilizing housing situations for tenants and homeowners. Even before the pandemic, Washington communities faced a massive affordable housing shortage and a growing number of persons entering homelessness.

Government operations during the pandemic.

Modifying Washington's existing Open Public Meeting Act and Public Records Act to preserve their spirit while ensuring compliance. The OPMA should be updated to allow use of new remote technologies that better serve the public and provide flexibility to public meetings and testimony, especially in emergency situations. PRA response times must be flexible in an emergency where physical access to documents is impaired or when mail delivery may be less frequent due to remote work arrangements.

Courts.

Provide counties with funds to alleviate the impacts of the already backlogged court system worsened by the pandemic. Support for the judiciary and maintaining effective, efficient courts are crucial to a just society.

Broadband access.

Continue investment to expand broadband access. Geographic, economic, and other variables hinder access to quality high-speed broadband for too many Washington residents, with inadequate and unaffordable service in every county across the state.

Combating Climate Change and Protecting our Environment

Climate change.

Adequate funding and flexibility to adapt any new climate change impact reduction responsibilities to local conditions. Counties can help the state meet its goals for

reducing climate change causes but face different impacts, and solutions for meeting climate change-related goals should be flexible and tailored to local conditions.

Salmon habitat.

Adequate funding for repairing or replacing thousands of fish-blocking culverts in our state stream systems to ensure the state is in full legal compliance. Like the state, counties have thousands of fish blocking culverts that need to be repaired or replaced, with will costs billions of dollars counties don't have.

Forest health.

New resources for improving forest health, enhancing fire resiliency, responding and containing wildland fires, rehabilitating affected areas, and coordinating prescribed burns. Forestlands are essential resources that create jobs, support education and other services, and meet cultural and recreational needs. Forest health is critical to a healthy environment, clean water, and wildlife habitat.

Fire.

Increase the ability of local fire districts and the Department of Natural Resources to respond to and contain wildfires. Wildfires affect all counties and are becoming more frequent across the state, and air quality has been extremely hazardous for long periods due to smoke.

Growth management.

Greater flexibility in managing growth, and a new, reliable, sustainable funding source for planning requirements, and funding for any new ones. Counties are required to protect farm and forest lands, rivers and lakes, and other sensitive environments. Many must also manage for growth, but planning is expensive and there are updates and reforms needed to make the GMA more functional and effective.

Waste management.

Modern, safe, and working infrastructure is critical to county solid waste programs meeting growing demands and protecting the environment. Dedicated funding for investing in the future of solid waste

management is crucial for success. Recently approved and emerging statewide priorities for waste reduction, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, litter control, and others that impact county solid waste programs should include collaboration with counties and must include resources for implementation of new requirements.

Water quality and water supply.

Dedicated funding for state programs that improve water quality or support and enhance water supplies to ensure counties' effective implementation. Water is vital to local economies, agriculture, recreation, and environmental health. Fair and equitable water distribution, along with programs that improve water quality, are essential to meeting the needs of all counties.



Ending Racial Disparities and Social Inequities

Health disparities.

Stable and adaptive funding for public health departments to increase capacity, modernize, and manage emerging threats and longstanding health impacts. Local health jurisdictions are the frontline defenders against community threats like infectious diseases, chronic illness, environmental toxins, and public health emergencies.

Public defense.

Adequate funding for trial court public defense costs to ensure the constitutionally protected right to a defense attorney for all. Access to a defense attorney is a fundamental constitutional right. Improving access to justice is a critical component in tackling inequality and ensuring that access is equal, regardless of where you live.

State v. Blake.

Provide funds to cover the full cost of the State v. Blake decision. The Supreme Court's decision presented an unprecedented challenge to the state's criminal justice system that severely impacts the already backlogged court system caused by the pandemic. Funding for resentencing and vacating convictions and reimbursing the associated legal financial obligations is critical.

Making Long-term Investments, Securing Long-term Solvency

Road maintenance.

Reliable, sustainable funding for county transportation budgets. Counties are responsible for roughly half of Washington's transportation system but face this responsibility at a time when motor vehicle fuel taxes are declining, and the costs of preservation and construction are on the rise.

Capital investments.

Ensure adequate funding for county infrastructure. Counties are responsible for maintaining a variety of public facilities and infrastructure and need state investment in water, sewer, solid waste, and buildings to keep them safe and functional. Investments in infrastructure are vital to economic growth and essential to vibrant communities and, yet, too often maintenance competes with mandates while facilities age and deteriorate.

Fiscal solvency.

New authority for counties to control their cost drivers and grow revenue sources that keep pace with increasing costs. The county financial structure must meet the needs of modern county governments. At the same time, the Legislature must not continue to shift costs though policy changes without addressing the underlying funding problems that face county budgets.



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Legislative Steering Committee

The Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) is responsible for preparing and recommending a proposed legislative agenda for the review and approval of the active WSAC members. The LSC monitors the events of each legislative session and is empowered to adopt policy relating to legislation, executive branch policies and operation, and the activities of other organizations and associations.



39 counties
involved

Kate Dean,
Co-Chair
Jefferson County
Commissioner

Brad Peck,
Co-Chair
Franklin County
Commissioner

LSC ROSTER

Dan Blankenship
Adams County

Chris Seibert
Asotin County

Jerome Delvin
Benton County

Kevin Overbay
Chelan County

Bill Peach
Clallam County

Gary Medvay
Clark County

Charles Amrein
Columbia County

Dennis Weber
Coville County

Dan Sutton
Douglas County

Derek Giarukakis
Ferry County

Brad Peck
Franklin County

Jim Nelson
Garfield County

Rob Jones
Grant County

Vickie Paines
Grays Harbor County

Jill Johnson
Idaho County

Kate Dean
Jefferson County

Joe McDermott
King County Council

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Robert Gelder
Kitsap County

Laura Osadacz
Kittitas County

David Sauter
Mickel County

Lindsay Pollock
Lewis County

Scott Hulse
Lincoln County

Sharon Trank
Mission County

Chris Branch
Okanogan County

Lisa Olsen
Pacific County

John Gentile
Pend Oreille County

Derek Young
Pierce County Council

Ryan Mello
Pierce County Council

Alternate
Pierce County Executive

Jaime Stephens
San Juan County

Lisa Janicki
Skagit County

Bob Hamlin
Skamania County

Megan Dunn
Snohomish County Council

Dave Somers
Snohomish County Executive

Al Franch
Spokane County

Wes McCart
Stevens County

Carolana Mella
Thurston County

Lee Ischer
Wahkan County

Greg Tompkins
Walla Walla County

Kaylee Galloway
Whitcomb County Council

Sajpal Sidhu
Whitcomb County Executive

Al Swannick
Winthrop County

Amanda McKinney
Yakima County



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2022 End of Session Report

The Voice of
Washington
Counties



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2022 Legislative Session Overview

The 60-day 2022 Legislative Session was a tough one this year. It was the second year in a remote-only format and tackled issues substantively more appropriate for a 105-day session. The following summary outlines the session as it relates to WSAC's policy goals; but for many legislative sessions, including this one, success is also measured by what didn't pass and wasn't listed as a policy goal.

For example, WSAC successfully defeated several bills that would have increased your civil legal liability:

- SB 5155 would have allowed plaintiffs to collect interest from the date of the alleged incident rather than the date of judgment regardless of the reason for delay, most of which are outside of a county's control, and regardless of when the county was notified.
- SB 5116, automated decision systems, could have subjected local governments to restrictions and oversight for systems that are difficult to define. The governor vetoed a budget proviso that provided \$100,000 to develop an initial inventory of all automated decision-making systems and adopt guidance by June 30, 2022, but is directing the work to be completed by November 30, 2023.
- While no one opposes voting rights, SB 5597 needs a lot of technical work before it's ready for prime time. Several of our amendments were accepted, but this bill is too complicated to introduce for the first time in a short session.

Responding to the COVID Crisis

Disease Response and Containment

POSITION

Adequate funding for case investigation, vaccination, and public outreach/education. Adequate funding for coordination of care for people isolated in quarantine who need support beyond testing.

OUTCOME

- \$124.8 million to maintain efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 through testing, care coordination, outbreak response, disease surveillance, and COVID-19 vaccine work to address unequal vaccination coverage across the state. Funding is appropriated to the DOH to work with local health jurisdictions to fund local activities and services not reimbursed through FEMA.

Behavioral Health

POSITION

Adequate funding for the behavioral health system, including jails.

OUTCOME

- The Supplemental budget included additional grants totaling \$814,000 to establish new school-based health centers and add behavioral health capacity to existing school-based health centers.
- The Legislature passed HB 1074, which authorizes local health jurisdictions to implement fatality review teams to inform community-centered strategies to combat overdose and suicide deaths.
- \$1.3 million is provided to address gaps in strategies to prevent youth suicide. This includes funding to implement youth suicide prevention campaigns.

Making Long-Term Investments, Securing Long-Term Solvency

Road Maintenance

POSITION

Reliable, sustainable funding for county transportation budgets.

OUTCOME

- The Move Ahead Washington Transportation package includes
 - \$10 million to the County Road Administration Board per biennium solely for additional preservation funding allocations through County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP).
 - \$1,250 million for prevention of rural roadway vehicle lane departures.
 - The final transportation budget also includes a Joint Transportation Committee process over the interim for making a recommendation to the Legislature regarding the state/local split of formula distributions for the IJA.
- HB 1918 would have required the transition to zero-emission outdoor power equipment had it passed.
- HB 1722 would have allowed companies to "microtrench" to lay broadband fiber. The bill did not pass but the budget includes a proviso establishing a task force on broadband deployment.
- ESSB 5974 includes new local option authority related to Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD). Local jurisdictions that have formed a TBD now have authority to implement one-tenth of one percent sales tax revenue for their District and can extend revenue collection beyond 10 years.

Capital Investments

POSITION

Counties are responsible for maintaining a variety of public facilities and infrastructure and need state investment in water, sewer, solid waste, and buildings to keep them safe and functional.

OUTCOME

- The Public Works Board received \$120 million new authority to spend in 2021-23 biennium. The authority does not necessarily equate to the ability to spend funds, which they may not have available after \$57 million per year is transferred to the Move Ahead Washington transportation account.

Fiscal Solvency

POSITION

New authority for counties to control their cost drivers and grow revenue sources that keep pace with increasing costs.

OUTCOME

- HB 1333 would have extended the .09 sales and use tax for public facilities in rural counties until 2054. Despite significant coalition efforts, this bill died last year and this year in the Senate. However, a proviso was included in the final operating budget that requires the State Auditor to publish the reports counties provide regarding how they use the tax.
- HB 1921 would have provided an optional "payment in lieu of taxes" alternative to the standard taxing structure for counties siting solar and wind electricity facilities. Another bill too complicated for a short session, it died in the House.
- HB 1672 would have removed the Conservation Futures District property tax levy from the 1% levy growth limit. The bill died in the House Finance Committee.
- HB 1965 would have permitted counties to collect the Veterans' Assistance Levy and the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Levy as separate levies outside the growth limit. This bill made it out of committee but died in House Rules.
- SB 5796 restructures cannibal revenue appropriations, which delivered an additional \$5 million to local governments in the final operating budget.



Ending Racial Disparities and Social Inequities

Health Disparities

POSITION

Stable and adaptive funding for public health departments to increase capacity, modernize, and manage emerging threats and longstanding health impacts.

OUTCOME

- \$5 million to support community-based strategies for cessation, treatment, and prevention from tobacco and vapor products, including education and prevention centered on reducing youth access.
- HB 1893 passed and gives local public health the authority to grant EMTs additional medical oversight during local emergencies as a strategy to increase access to care in remote areas.

Public Defense

POSITION

Adequate funding for trial court public defense costs to ensure the constitutionally protected right to a defense attorney for all.

OUTCOME

- No additional funds were allocated for public defense.

State v. Blake

POSITION

Provide funds to cover the full cost of the State v. Blake decision.

OUTCOME

- Within the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC): Reallocating \$44.5 million to counties in the Judicial Stabilization Trust Account for resentencing and vacating Blake convictions, \$46.75 million in the same account to establish an LFO aid pool for counties to refund LFOs and collection costs from Blake convictions. A direct refund process will be established.
- \$63,000 for 2022 and \$251,000 for 2023 to facilitate and coordinate the scheduling of resentencing hearings.
- \$2,025 million for AOC's administration of Blake. This must include collaborating with courts, clerks and administrators to prepare Blake reports; and establishing a process to locate individuals for LFO refunds.
- \$131,000 for a court policy analyst position to support the district and municipal courts judges' association with Blake.
- Cities: \$1.5 million for cities to comply with Blake ruling for resentencing and vacations and \$10 million for the LFO aid pool.
- For the Office of Public Defense (OPD): \$286,000 for 2022 and \$1,008 million for 2023 for the implementation of a triage team to provide statewide support to the management and flow of hearings for individuals impacted by Blake.
- For the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA): \$2.25M to continue and expand online automated plain language forms, outreach, education, technical assistance, and legal assistance to help resolve civil matters related to Blake.
- \$2 million for the Health Care Authority (HCA) to increase contracts for recovery navigator services in ESB 5476, which must be used to increase funding for services in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.
- \$500,000 to increase contingency management resources in SB 5476.

Responding to the COVID Crisis Continued

Government Operations

POSITION

Modifying Washington's existing Open Public Meeting Act and Public Records Act to preserve their spirit while ensuring compliance.

OUTCOME

- The final version of HB 1329 includes key provisions of HB 1056. The combined bill allows counties to conduct fully remote meetings when a local or statewide emergency is declared; requires the opportunity for public comment in certain circumstances; requires the opportunity for public comment remotely, if feasible, upon the request of an individual for whom in-person attendance is difficult; and requires most public agencies, except the smallest, to post agendas online. Public agencies are encouraged to provide for increased access and participation through the use of remote technologies.

Courts

POSITION

Provide counties with funds to alleviate the impacts of the already backlogged court system worsened by the pandemic.

OUTCOME

- \$2.05 million is provided to assist trial courts across the state in addressing the backlog created by the pandemic through the use of pro tem judges and backlog coordinators.
- \$2.5M for trial courts to address impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- \$5M for audio visual upgrades in courtrooms across the state.
- \$4.9M for grant funding to counties for the creation of new therapeutic courts or expansion of services in existing therapeutic courts.

Affordable Housing

POSITION

New investment in stabilizing housing situations for tenants and homeowners.

OUTCOME

- SB 5868 adds workforce housing to the list of authorized uses for the .09 sales and use tax for public facilities in rural counties.
- The legislature included historic investments in affordable homes and homelessness prevention.
- There were over \$400 million new dollars in the Capital Budget for housing, including \$114 million for the Housing Trust Fund, \$240 million for rapid housing acquisition.
- There were also funds dedicated to homeless youth facilities, the new Apple Health and Homes program, housing preservation, and affordable housing development.
- The Operating Budget included funding for pre-eviction legal aid, homelessness service providers, rental assistance, foreclosure prevention, permanent supportive housing, and services to help transition people from unsheltered homelessness into affordable housing.
- It also included a permanent increase to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) cash grant from \$197 to \$417 per month.
- The total two-year capital investment for building or acquiring affordable homes and shelter is over \$734 million.



Combating Climate Change and Protecting Our Environment



Climate Change

POSITION

Adequate funding and flexibility to adapt any new climate change impact reduction responsibilities to local conditions.

OUTCOME

- E2SHB 1099 would have added a new goal to the GMA for addressing climate change. It included requirements for some counties to plan for reducing GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled. It also would have required all counties to address issues of climate resiliency. However, the bill died in the House at the last minute.
- \$5.41 million was provided in the Operating Budget for implementing E2SHB 1099, including the costs of local government planning, but the bill did not pass.
- The Operating Budget includes grant funding to increase solar deployment and battery storage in community buildings to enhance grid resiliency and provide backup power for critical needs.



Forest Health

POSITION

New resources for improving forest health, enhancing fire resiliency, responding and containing wildland fires, rehabilitating affected areas, and coordinating prescribed burns.

OUTCOME

- The DNR proposed legislation to enhance forestland conservation programs and to implement programs to expand forestland in the state (HB 1895, SB 5633). The bill ultimately failed.
- \$10 million is provided in the operating budget to provide funding for the DNR to purchase lands to replace state forestlands encumbered by the marbled murrelet long-term conservation strategy in five counties.
- HB 1891 was introduced this session, instructing DNR to conduct a rangeland fire protection association pilot project to better assess the measures needed to ensure the safe and effective operation of rangeland fire protection associations. The bill was not passed.



Salmon Habitat

POSITION

Provide adequate funding to repair or replace thousands of fish-blocking culverts and maximize habitat recovery through a coordinated watershed-based program.

OUTCOME

- The legislature allocated \$2.435 billion for state owned barriers. While no funding was provided for local governments, the new legislation does include "intent" language that will hopefully have the effect of strengthening the cooperation between the state and local governments so that we can work together through the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board to coordinate projects and resources and optimize habitat restoration and species recovery. Specifically, the new language states that the appropriation for WSDOT's fish barrier removal projects may be used to jointly leverage state and local funds for match requirements in applying for competitive federal aid grants provided through the new national culvert removal, replacement, and restoration program in the IUA.



Waste Management

POSITION

Modern, safe, and working infrastructure is critical to county solid waste programs meeting growing demands and protecting the environment. Dedicated funding for investing in the future of solid waste management is crucial for success.

OUTCOME

- E2SHB 1663 requires landfills of a certain size and that emit a certain level of methane gas to install landfill gas capture systems. Landfills with existing gas capture systems must also meet new standards and may require upgrades.
- E2SHB 1799 implements requirements for managing organic wastes differently by separating them from other solid wastes, removing them from landfilling practices, and requiring expansion of composting and anaerobic digestion facilities. The bill includes a requirement to study the costs of various solid waste proposals and develop strategies for future funding of solid waste programs.



Water Quality and Water Supply

POSITION

Dedicated funding for state programs that improve water quality or support and enhance water supplies to ensure counties' effective implementation.

OUTCOME

- A funding request by the Department of Ecology to begin work reshaping the state's water code considering climate change and other impacts was opposed by numerous stakeholders, including counties, cities, and tribes. The funding request failed.
- Governor's request legislation expanding riparian buffers across the state died very early in the session (HB 1838, SB 5727). The operating budget provides funding for the Governor's office to develop recommendations to improve riparian habitat with the help of stakeholders, including local governments.