

December 2, 2009

# 2010 Legislative Agenda



During the 2009 legislative session, WSAC pursued a fiscal health package that sought additional revenue options, flexibility within existing revenue sources, increased public health funding, flexibility in how we conduct business and no harm from state budget reductions.

Counties made some progress with the 2009 fiscal health package. The Legislature provided temporary flexibility with some of the revenue sources; they provided some flexibility with existing business practices and they maintained most of the funding for several shared revenue sources.

However, while the Legislature gave themselves flexibility by transferring multiple fund sources into the general fund (for example transferring the entire balance of the Public Works Trust Fund into the operating budget) they did not provide similar relief to local government. In some cases, they actually imposed additional criteria for several grant programs, left intact many unfunded mandates and did not provide any significant new revenue authorities. Since the 2009 legislative session the budget situation for local governments, like the state, has only worsened.

The WSAC priorities for the 2010 legislative session are tailored to this dramatic budget environment:

## Flexibility within Existing Revenue

- Remove the non-supplant requirement for the 1/10 Criminal Justice Safety Sales Tax that is shared with cities- RCW 82.14.340
- Remove the non-supplant requirement for the 3/10 Public Safety Sales Tax that is shared with cities-RCW 82.14.450
- Harmonize the allowed uses for the 1st and 2nd quarter of the REET- RCW 82.46.035
- Revenue and use flexibility within the Transportation Benefit District RCW 36.37 (SHB 1591)
- Expand the eligible uses of GMA Impact fees to include fire and public safety
- Expand the use of the road levy

## Flexibility within Existing Grant/Loan Programs

Local governments need access to grant and loan programs that are relatively free of undue restrictions. WSAC will advocate for greater flexibility in fund sources such as the:

- Public Works Trust Fund
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
- Housing programs
- Allocation of funds through block grants or other distributions

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WASHINGTON STATE  
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

## Mandates

Local governments struggle to implement basic programs that have been delegated by the state. During these budget times, local governments are being forced to choose which activities absolutely must be implemented. WSAC will advocate that relief be provided from these requirements so that basic services can continue to be provided, such as:

- Indigent defense-dependency cases
- Provide substantial relief from the requirement to update GMA and SMA plans
- Provide resources to meet stormwater requirements
- Buildable lands review/update

## Investing in Local Government Efficiency and Effectiveness

Local governments continually look for ways to provide efficient and effective services. Without funding local governments are limited in developing and implementing best practices. Funding and/or consultation should be provided as an investment in local government that will reduce costs in the future such as:

- Updating evaluation and assessment technology
- Providing easy public access to records through county internet sites
- Streamlining operating procedures
- Integrating local and state permit review technology
- Ongoing evaluation of local government governance options

## Financial Assistance

- Additional funding into the county/city financial assistance program -6050
- Maintain funding for public health and human services funding
- Maintain existing state shared revenues (Criminal Justice, Streamlined Sales Tax, Liquor, Public Health)
- Maintain allocated state funding in the public mental health system by suspending "penalties" to DSHS (when under the statewide bed cap)

## New Local Revenue Authorities

In some cases, flexibility and relief from mandated activities will not be sufficient, and local governments require the authority to raise additional revenue. WSAC will pursue:

- Utility tax for the unincorporated areas
- Severance tax for mineral resource extraction
- Additional funding for public health
- New revenue for transportation/transit