

**JEFFERSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**AGENDA REQUEST**

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
Philip Morley, County Administrator

**FROM:** Leslie Locke, Deputy Clerk of the Board

**DATE:** July 14, 2014

**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION re: Supporting the Washington State Association of Counties  
(WSAC) Fiscal Sustainability Initiative

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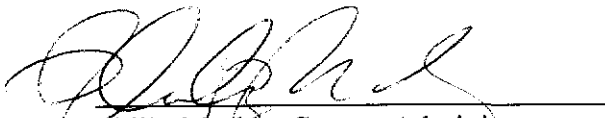
**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

A letter was received from the Washington State Association of Counties requesting Counties approve a resolution endorsing the County Fiscal Sustainability Initiative.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the resolution.

**REVIEWED BY:**

  
Philip Morley, County Administrator

7/9/14  
Date

**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
COUNTY OF JEFFERSON**

In the Matter of Supporting the Washington }  
State Association of Counties (WSAC) } Resolution No.  
Fiscal Sustainability Initiative }

**WHEREAS**, County governments across the State of Washington are facing a financial and service delivery crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the cost of providing essential public services is outpacing the growth of revenue, leaving counties with few options other than cutting services to the public; and

**WHEREAS**, under the Constitution and laws for the State of Washington, many state programs are administered and carried out by counties for residents of both incorporated and unincorporated areas including: administering and operating civil and criminal justice systems; running elections; assessing and collecting property taxes to support schools, cities, fire districts and other functions in addition to county operations; developing plans including Growth Management and Shoreline Management plans; delivering public health services, environmental health services, and funding or coordinating programs for youth, senior citizens, the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled; and addressing the need for low-income housing; and

**WHEREAS**, counties also provide a primary government service for residents of unincorporated areas including law enforcement, animal control, transportation, land use and development permitting, and parks and recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, the public services that counties provide are essential to the functions of state government and to the wellbeing of the citizens, businesses and communities we serve; and

**WHEREAS**, unlike states and cities, counties are financed primarily by just two sources of revenue: property taxes, and sales and use taxes; yet property tax growth is capped at 1% plus the value of new construction (which remains at historic lows), and sales tax collections are constrained by the rural character of unincorporated counties under the Growth Management Act; and the value of both of these revenues continues to lose ground against the real cost of inflation; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to revenue limitations, counties are challenged with a host of regulatory requirements that are increasingly complex and expensive, expanding liability costs, and increasing employment costs, regardless of a county's ability to pay; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) has launched its Fiscal Sustainability Initiative in an effort to educate lawmakers about the services counties provide, advance new revenue generation and cost containment options to improve the fiscal health of county governments, and to advance legislation in support of those options;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Jefferson County Commissioners hereby express support for the Washington State Association of Counties' Fiscal Sustainability Initiative and a willingness work with WSAC and other county officials across the state to advance the adequate and sustainable funding for vital county government services.

**APPROVED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of July, 2014.

JEFFERSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SEAL:

John Austin, Chairman

ATTEST:

Phil Johnson, Member

Carolyn Avery, Deputy Clerk of the Board

David Sullivan, Member



Washington State  
Association of Counties

RECEIVED

July 02, 2014

JUL 07 2014

The Honorable John Austin, Chair, Jefferson County Board of Commissioners  
PO Box 1220  
Port Townsend, WA 98368-6951

JEFFERSON COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS

Dear Commissioner Austin:

Though the beginning of the 2015 Legislative Session is still over six months away, preparations are underway to make this as successful a session as possible. WSAC is preparing a legislative agenda focused on advancing the county Fiscal Sustainability Initiative. We know that many counties are also in the process of preparing their legislative agendas.

Our influence with the Legislature is greatly enhanced when counties speak with a unified voice. Toward that end, we are asking all counties to include the county Fiscal Sustainability Initiative on their individual county legislative agenda. The manner in which you do so, and the specific language you use is not as important as simply ensuring that your county's support for the WSAC legislative agenda is mentioned in your county agenda. If your county has not prepared a legislative agenda in the past, we would encourage you to do so even if the sole purpose is to indicate support for the Fiscal Sustainability Initiative.

We are also asking individual counties to adopt a resolution endorsing the county Fiscal Sustainability Initiative. In 2013 eight counties adopted resolutions (Benton, Island, Kittitas, Snohomish, Spokane, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, and Whatcom), and we are hoping the remaining counties will do the same this year. Enclosed with this letter is an example of one county's resolution.

If you have any questions about the resolution or legislative agenda document, WSAC staff stand ready to assist you and can be contacted through Josh Weiss at (360) 489-3015 or [jweiss@wacounties.org](mailto:jweiss@wacounties.org). As your WSAC Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chairs we are also happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kathy Lambert in cursive.

Kathy Lambert  
Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chair  
King County Councilmember

Handwritten signature of Kevin Bouchey in cursive.

Kevin Bouchey  
Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chair  
Yakima County Commissioner



SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL  
SNOHOMISH COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
Snohomish County, Washington

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13-018-

**A JOINT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION  
OF COUNTIES (WSAC) FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE**

**WHEREAS**, county governments across the State of Washington are facing a financial and service delivery crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the cost of providing essential public services is outpacing the growth of revenue, leaving counties with few options other than cutting services to the public; and

**WHEREAS**, under the Constitution and laws for the State of Washington, many state programs are administered and carried out by counties for residents of both incorporated and unincorporated areas including: administering and operating civil and criminal justice systems; running elections; assessing and collecting property taxes to support schools, cities, fire districts and other functions in addition to county operations; developing plans including Growth Management and Shoreline Management plans; delivering public health services as well as programs for the mentally ill, developmentally disabled; and addressing the need for low-income housing; and

**WHEREAS**, counties also provide a primary government services for residents of unincorporated areas including law enforcement, transportation (both roads and transit), land use and zoning, parks, animal control, stormwater control; and

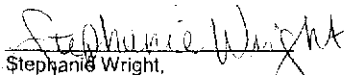
**WHEREAS**, unlike states and cities, counties are financed primarily by two sources of revenue: property taxes and sales and use taxes. However, property tax growth is capped at 1% plus the value of new construction, and sales tax collections have become increasingly challenging with the Growth Management Act allowing cities to annex large tax-paying businesses into their jurisdictions; and

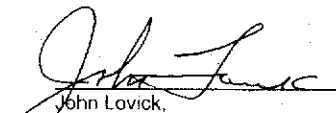
**WHEREAS**, in addition to revenue limitations, counties are challenged with a host of regulatory requirements that are increasingly complex and expensive, expanding liability costs, and increasing employment costs, regardless of a county's ability to pay; and


**WHEREAS**, WSAC launched its Fiscal Sustainability Initiative in an effort to educate lawmakers about the services counties provide, advance new revenue generation and cost containment options to improve the fiscal health of county governments, and to advance legislation in support of those options.


**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Snohomish County Executive and the Snohomish County Council hereby express support for the Washington State Association of Counties Fiscal Sustainability Initiative, and a willingness work with WSAC and other county officials across the state to advance the initiative.


APPROVED this 2nd day of October, 2013.


  
Stephanie Wright,  
Council Chair

  
John Lovick,  
County Executive

  
Dave Somers,  
Council Vice-Chair

  
Dave Gossett,  
Councilmember

  
Brian Sullivan,  
Councilmember

  
John Koster,  
Councilmember

ATTEST:

  
Kathryn J. Bratcher, Clerk of the Council