



King County

Shannon Braddock
King County Executive

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June 5, 2025

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, establish a retail sales tax of one-tenth of one percent, effective January 1, 2026, with proceeds supporting the County's criminal justice programs and add a new section to King County Code 4A.500. Appropriation of the funds generated by this new revenue source, if approved, will be proposed in the Executive's 2026-2027 budget that will be transmitted to the Council in September.

Washington State Legislature's Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2015, Section 201, allows the legislative authority of a qualified city or county to authorize a sales and use tax of one-tenth of a percent upon the occurrence of any taxable event, contingent on the city or county qualifying for grant funding through the newly created Local Law Enforcement Grant Program. Qualification for grant funding is determined through the submittal of documentation to the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) establishing that certain requirements have been met within a county's criminal justice policy and practice.

Per statute, which will be effective July 27, 2025, the CJTC has 45 days from receiving a county's documentation to validate that the requirements have been met or to state that deficiencies exist. The county is then able to authorize the new revenue, contingent on either validation or submittal of additional documentation demonstrating that the county has rectified deficiencies. If the county has enacted the tax but not rectified all deficiencies within 180 days of the initial submittal to the CJTC, the State Treasurer must withhold \$100,000 of the revenue collected each month until the CJTC validates that requirements are met. The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO), as the County's law enforcement agency, meets the currently established requirements to receive a grant from the Local Law Enforcement Grant program. The KCSO will submit documentation to the CJTC this summer.

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If approved, the new revenue tool is forecasted to generate \$95 million a year. Since nearly 75 percent of the General Fund is dedicated to public safety and the criminal legal system, the measure would generate sufficient funding to offset the County's previously projected \$150 million biennial General Fund deficit, avoiding deep cuts to essential services and programs.

The revenue generated is restricted to supporting criminal justice programs and services, which may include circumstances with ancillary benefits to the civil legal and behavioral health systems. Such circumstances may include domestic violence services; diversion and reentry programs; local government programs that reduce the number of people interacting with the criminal justice system; community placements for juveniles involved with the criminal legal system; community outreach and assistance programs; and alternative mental health crisis response programs. The County is required to submit a report to the Washington State Association of Counties detailing how the revenue was spent within one year of collection and annually thereafter.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposed legislation. This important proposed Ordinance will allow the County to continue to advance community health and public safety and avoid drastic cuts to our criminal legal system.

If your staff have questions, please contact Dwight Dively, Director, King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, at 206-263-9687.

Sincerely,



for

Shannon Braddock
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council
 Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council
Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Stephanie Pure, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
Dwight Dively, Director, King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget