



**KING COUNTY**  
**Signature Report**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**January 17, 2012**

**Motion 13629**

**Proposed No. 2011-0496.2**

**Sponsors Gossett**

1           A MOTION adopting the King County 2012 State  
2           Legislative Agenda and the King County 2012 Statement of  
3           State Policy.

4           WHEREAS, the King County council and the King County executive have  
5 worked together through their respective government relations staff and desire to bring  
6 their positions on issues facing the 2012 Washington state Legislature to the attention of  
7 the Washington state Legislature, and

8           WHEREAS, King County desires to work cooperatively with other local  
9 governments and other organizations such as the Washington State Association of  
10 Counties, the Washington Association of County Officials, the Suburban Cities  
11 Association, and the Association of Washington Cities to achieve its 2012 legislative  
12 goals, and

13           WHEREAS, counties have been recognized by the Legislature as partners with  
14 the state in the delivery of such critical services as transportation, criminal justice, public  
15 health, community and human services, and water resources, and

16           WHEREAS, King County is dependent on a strong fiscal partnership with the  
17 State, and

18           WHEREAS, King County has a limited number of revenue sources available to  
19 mitigate impacts of budget reductions at the state level, and

20 WHEREAS, the ongoing national recession has resulted in dramatic budget  
21 shortfalls at all levels of government across the nation, and

22 WHEREAS, the dramatic downturn of the economy has magnified structural  
23 problems as the forecast for sales tax and interest earnings deteriorate and the cost of  
24 providing services increases due to rising inflation, and

25 WHEREAS, King County's ability to deliver health care, human services,  
26 criminal justice, and other basic services is directly impacted by reductions in the state  
27 budget, and

28 WHEREAS, the state's across-the-board reductions have already affected key  
29 functions of county departments and agencies, and

30 WHEREAS, King County is dedicated to exploring with the state new ideas for  
31 sustained funding for critical services such as transportation, criminal justice, health and  
32 human services, and flood protection, and

33 WHEREAS, the King County council and the King County executive will  
34 continue to review legislative developments for possible revisions of King County's 2012  
35 state legislative program;

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

37 The King County council hereby adopts the attached King County 2012 State  
38 Legislative Agenda and King County 2012 Statement of State Policy as King County's

39 highest priorities for action in the 2012 legislative session of the Washington state  
40 Legislature.  
41


Motion 13629 was introduced on 12/5/2011 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 1/17/2012, by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Patterson, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. McDermott  
No: 1 - Ms. Lambert  
Excused: 3 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Hague and Mr. Dunn

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Larry Gossett, Chair

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** A. King County 2012 State Legislative Agenda, dated January 17, 2012, B. King County 2012 Statement of State Policy, dated January 17, 2012



## **King County 2012 State Legislative Agenda**

### **King County**

King County's top state legislative priorities represent a commitment to meeting the most critical needs of its residents despite ongoing challenges. This agenda aims to protect essential functions ranging from health and human services to sustainable funding for local roads and transit. It reflects the County's partnerships with our public employees and with state agencies, as well as our desire to make King County a thriving hub of economic development and job creation. These key policy objectives further support the county's Strategic Plan and its focus on efficiency, partnerships, and customer service.

#### **Health, Housing, and Human Services & Health Reform Implementation**

King County believes in preserving the safety net of basic services for its residents. Funding for programs that are critical to maintaining a foundational level of support for our communities include those that provide maternity support, mental health, public and primary health care, substance abuse, family planning, domestic violence prevention, housing and services for low income and homeless persons, food assistance, and disability including developmental disability services. Cuts at the state level often compound those from the federal government, and that magnifying effect is appreciable. We support the implementation of health reform provisions that will strengthen access to quality health services to all residents, that will further integrate primary and behavioral health care services, and that will support provision of preventive services that address the underlying causes of health inequities.

#### **Resources for Transportation Needs – Funding, Tools & Flexibility for Transit & Roads**

The Connecting Washington Task Force deliberations emphasize the need for statewide investments. New revenues and financing tools should prioritize new resources for preserving local and regional roads and bridges, sustainable funding sources for public transportation, and giving regions flexibility to make investments to suit their needs. King County supports additional direct state support for local and regional needs, as well as local revenue tools to augment the state's direct investment. One specific tool was included as part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct three-party agreement from January 2009, stating that King County is to be granted revenue authority in order to provide additional permanent transit capacity in the corridor. In order for the project to succeed, the County must be granted that authority and must receive mitigation for construction impacts. Both directly distributed and competitive state and federal funds continue to be key resources for the County's diverse transportation needs.

#### **Consolidation of Special Districts' Governance into County Government**

The careful consolidation of the King County Ferry and Flood Control Zone Districts' governance and oversight into the County could achieve considerable efficiencies and savings that could translate to greater deployed services. It is critical that the existing property tax authorities supporting the Districts each be maintained separate from the existing County's general taxing authority, in order to preserve the resources necessary to support these critical public safety and transportation & mobility services for county residents without expanding the Districts' current scope of authorization.

#### **Independently Governed Non-profit or Private Entities & Public Agency Contracts**

Public agencies contract with independently governed non-profit or private entities to provide many essential functions that serve our residents. These functions include human services, construction, and facility leases. The non-profit and private entities hire and manage employees to deliver these services. The recent State Supreme Court ruling in *Dolan v. King County* creates great ambiguity about what constitutes a public employee. A clarification is necessary so that public agencies can continue to contract for services and provide necessary fiscal oversight without uncertainty about past or future pension or other obligations.

#### **Preserve Existing Authority & Additional Local Revenue Options and Flexibility**

Local governments need increased access to existing and new revenue tools in order to maintain and improve core services and quality of life in the face of decreasing support from the state and federal

government. The County must both preserve its current revenue authority and gain additional flexibility within existing mechanisms. Financial partnerships between the State and local governments like the annexation sales tax credit, liquor profits and revenues, and streamlined sales tax mitigation payments are built on a mutual trust and provide critical flexible resources. Counties also seek new councilmatic and voter-approved revenue tools to accommodate additional demands shifted to the local level.

### **King County Aerospace Alliance**

It is critical that the Boeing 737 MAX airplane and future generations of the 737 be built in Washington. King County's civic, industry, and education leaders must assure the long-term vitality, growth, and global competitiveness of the aerospace industry—a major source of family-wage jobs for the County. Workforce training and government policies that allow aerospace companies, their suppliers, and their employees to thrive are imperative. The State is a critical partner in realizing our aerospace future.

### **Policy Reforms and Resources for Gang Violence Prevention & Intervention**

Keeping the public safe is a top priority for King County, and the proliferation of gang activity is a threat to public safety. King County recently invested \$1.4 million to enhance gang intervention and prevention efforts, but, because gang activity crosses county boundaries, King County cannot address this challenge alone. We support full funding of state investments in youth violence prevention and intervention programs, which have been proven to redirect youth away from becoming involved in gangs. While we support reforming the law related to firearm possession by juveniles to allow for escalating penalties for those who have a record of unlawful possession charges, we must simultaneously provide holistic prevention and intervention strategies to these youth and their families, to provide the opportunity to turn their lives around. Despite the budget challenges facing the state, programs that foster safe environments for our kids should be preserved. Following established best practices, only a comprehensive, balanced approach of prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry will accomplish this goal.

### **Allow the King County Assessor to Apply a Fee for Commercial Appeals Costs**

Appeals of commercial property tax assessments, because they are more involved than a typical residential appeal, include additional costs that are currently not covered by the existing appeals system. The County seeks new policy that would allow county assessors to collect a Commercial Appeals Fee, which would help cover the additional costs of commercial appeals.

### **Secure Medicine Return**

Unused and unwanted medicines present a serious concern due to poisonings, abuse, illegal diversion, and environmental impacts, and also place an undue burden on law enforcement. The County supports legislation that would direct pharmaceutical companies that sell their products in Washington to develop, fund, and implement a statewide take-back program for unwanted, unused, or left-over medicines from residential sources.

### **Allow Local Governments to Pre-Fund Future PERS Share into the DRS Pool**

The State Actuary projects that employer contribution rates for the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) will increase over time to address the unfunded liability. Because interest rates on local government investment pools generate very little interest growth in these funds, local governments should have the option to "pre-fund" future retirement contributions by contributing an amount above their current requirements into the State's Department of Retirement Services investment pool, where it could yield much higher returns.

### **Preserve and Strengthen the Regional Mobility Grant Program**

The Regional Mobility Grant program has proven to be a strong competitive grant process for many agencies and local governments, helping to finance capital projects like park-and-ride lots and HOV lanes, and operating programs like new service in interjurisdictional corridors. It is important that the criteria for the program be reaffirmed or updated to assure that the program can continue to thrive and that agencies can compete through an open and reliable process, making the best use of public dollars.

**King County**

## **King County 2012 Statement of State Policy**

### **Biodiversity Conservation & Habitat Protection and Restoration**

King County encourages state resources for implementation of habitat protection and restoration projects in approved WRIA-based salmon recovery plans. We support streamlining of federal and state permitting requirements and other incentives for public and private parties to carry out projects that will restore habitat for ESA-listed species as well as the consideration of multiple species and their habitats. We support the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's work to support high priority local parks and open space projects. We support incentives to protect working farm and forest lands and regionally significant open space and habitat. We support proposals to link state funding of infrastructure improvements and other amenities to agreements by cities to receive development rights.

### **Climate Change and Energy**

We support collaborative development of short- and long-term regional targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that meet or exceed state emissions reduction goals and are informed by current science, recent emissions inventories, and local land use patterns. We support alignment of state transportation funding and incentives with Vision 2040 recommendations for focused growth in urban centers. We support continued energy efficiency incentives and innovations, as well as the ongoing exploration of clean energy alternatives.

### **Economic Development**

We encourage state efforts to partner with local governments and provide them with tools needed to build strong, diverse, and sustainable economies. We support regional economic growth through strategic public-private partnerships such as the Central Puget Sound Regional Economic Strategy. King County also encourages increased funding for Associate Development Organizations to implement this and other economic strategies to retain existing businesses and strategically recruit new ones. We support revisions to public works and sole source contracting laws that would allow full compliance with state and federal laws and that would maximize the use of in-house employees in public works. We support continued funding of infrastructure programs that provide resources to local jurisdictions to promote economic development, including the Local Revitalization Financing Program, the Community Economic Revitalization Board, the Public Works Trust Fund, the Transportation Improvement Board, and the Model Toxics Control Account.

King County also strongly supports education and workforce development programs for youth and adults including adequate K-12 funding and continued funding for dislocated worker retraining programs—matched to industry skill needs—at community and technical colleges. King County promotes programs that provide public contracting opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses. We support maintenance and construction of infrastructure that facilitates efficient movement of freight and goods to promote domestic and international trade. Finally, we support rural economic development policies and programs that maintain the character of rural areas and sustain rural lifestyles.

### **Elections**

King County supports modifications to state election law that would provide cost savings and improved customer service. We also support consideration of policies to ensure greater efficiencies without compromising access to voting and democracy and customer service.

### **Emergency Management & Flood Hazard Reduction**

We support integrated approaches to major river flood hazard reduction, including development of regional standards for levee maintenance that both protect public safety and meet state and federal requirements for protecting listed species. We support an increased state role in providing support for major flood hazard mitigation projects, including those that meet multiple objectives of reducing future flood damages, protecting existing development, protecting habitat, and providing open space benefits. We support clarification of immunity and liability for flood control prevention and navigation projects. We support state development of integrated state goals, programs, and regulations for floodplain management. We support state involvement in emergency management and additional regional tools to support emergency preparedness and disaster response. We also support efforts to prevent harassment of E-911 operators and continued steps toward full implementation of E-911 programs.

### **Health Care and Support**

King County develops and implements creative and effective strategies and programs that prevent the leading causes of poor health, ensure access to appropriate and quality physical and behavioral health services, and promote individual health and intervention to reduce health disparities. Supporting and expanding this work requires stable funding at the state level for our public health, mental health and chemical dependency prevention and support infrastructure. Addressing health disparities in our community requires investments in resources and initiatives that will give all our residents access to affordable health care, including prescription drug coverage, alcohol and substance abuse treatment, and comprehensive mental health services.

The County seeks support for initiatives that will protect the health of our communities and provide environmental safeguards ensuring the safety of our residents. We support steps that will encourage healthy eating and active living standards that will prevent obesity and reduce use of tobacco and tobacco by-products, and that provide for local discretion over these policy and regulatory areas. We support state law modifications that would facilitate implementation of federal health reform and that would expand health care access and preventive care to all Washingtonians.

### **Homelessness & Housing**

King County is the administrative lead for the Countywide Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The plan's success is built on existing strong collaborations between local, state and federal governments and community nonprofit providers and having the tools to measure the effectiveness of our investments. We support maintaining and expanding funding and initiatives for affordable appropriate housing at the state level for homeless and low income residents of King County. Housing and supportive services help county residents remain successfully housed and prevent future homelessness.

Complementing the housing strategy is the provision of tools to reduce homelessness for families, individuals and youth through early support and intervention, including consideration of ways to prevent discharging youth and adults directly into homelessness from state institutions. We support modifications to the Homeless Management Information System toward its improved operation. We support robust funding for the Housing Trust Fund, which provides a powerful tool for local agencies' creation and support of affordable and homeless housing. We support the Housing & Essential Needs program and all of its components.

## **Human Services**

King County supports funding for human services programs that help all children and youth grow and prosper socially and academically, offer paths to reduce or prevent involvement in the criminal justice, crisis mental health and emergency medical systems, and provide a safety net of services and partnerships to support our most vulnerable residents. We further support initiatives that offer opportunities for independence, self-sufficiency and mobility for our residents of all ages.

We support state resources for homelessness programs, including the renewal of existing document recording fees. We support programs that assist the developmentally disabled, including early intervention funding and school transition funding. We support community mobilization programs and other means to prevent and treat substance abuse and violence. We support state resources to maintain access to mental health facilities and psychiatric beds.

## **Infrastructure and Transportation**

The roads system in unincorporated King County is critically important to people who live and travel in the county, but it is aged and deteriorating. Substantial investments are needed to restore roads and bridges, maintain them in good condition, and meet new transportation demands. However, the county's available funding falls far short of the need. The unincorporated-area road system owned and managed by the county includes 1,691 miles of paved roads, 51 miles of unpaved roads, 184 bridges—including several jointly owned with cities—and other related services and facilities within the 2,130 square miles of total land area in King County. King County seeks state funds to support county roads projects and facilities and will continue to pursue opportunities in future state revenue packages, state competitive grants, and other means that will help meet the great unmet needs of our county and regional facilities.

As the operator of one of the largest bus systems in the United States and the carrier for over 60% of all transit riders in the state, King County believes that a stable and well-funded transportation system is important to the economic prosperity and projected growth of our region. As we plan for the future it is clear that transit must play a larger role in moving people. We support efforts to provide public transit with a more diverse, stable, and robust funding source. We support the state's plans for a strong transit component as being critical to the designs for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and SR 520 corridors. We support mechanisms that facilitate smooth operation of the transit system, including fare card data management and fare enforcement. We support better integration of land use and transportation. We support efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled and to reduce greenhouse gas levels. We support opportunities to secure fee ownership of the eastside rail corridor by the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority and realize the goal of dual rail and trail use established by three local governments for the corridor.

We support continued funding of the Commute Trip Reduction program and the Regional Mobility Grant program. We support state policy that encourages innovation in carpool and vanpool programs. We encourage policy that facilitates transit's effective operation, including policies governing rental or lease of rights-of-way as well as equitable reimbursement for Medicaid-eligible non-emergency trips. We support efforts to expand the use of tolling and congestion pricing to address our infrastructure needs and manage traffic. We support legislative efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

King County supports a cooperative relationship with the State in providing for the ferry service needs of the residents of King County, including the effective use of toll credits and federal



funds toward maximizing our county investments. We also support efforts to assure compatible land uses adjacent to airport facilities.

### **Land Use, Growth Management and Annexation**

King County supports the Growth Management Act as the primary means of planning for growth. We support integration and streamlining of state land use and related statutes, as well as state funding to assist jurisdictions in meeting planning requirements. We support tools and incentives to facilitate annexations within urban growth areas and to help cities accommodate the transitional costs of annexations. We also support changes to state subdivision laws that would eliminate illegal practices or conflicts with local zoning. We support better integration of land use, transportation, and public health.

### **Law & Criminal Justice**

We support a fair and accessible justice system that keeps people safe in their homes and communities. We support the use of court fees that appropriately balance the need for revenue with the need to eliminate barriers to court access. We support a state/local split of state-imposed court fees that are collected at the local level. King County supports the development of statewide court case management systems and data exchange that will meet the needs of the County and the many users of its criminal justice system. We support state funding for state mandated programs, including dependency court appointed special advocates. We support tools that allow counties to work with one another in developing effective systems to share criminal justice information, including an appropriate exchange of mental health commitment and firearms information. We support the ability of law enforcement to destroy and dispose of firearms used in the commission of a crime through safe and responsible means. We support distribution of state resources for parents representation and for extraordinary criminal justice costs. We believe the state should bear responsibility for the costs of notice publication in dependency cases. We support legislation providing for continuation of federal benefits for qualifying mentally ill adult and juvenile inmates and detainees. We are committed to ending domestic violence and sexual assault for our residents. We continue to be concerned about human trafficking and will work to combat its practice.

King County believes that every person has the right to live, work, learn, feel safe and play free from discrimination. We support legislation that prevents discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and lending practices. We also support efforts to reduce and reverse disproportionate outcomes in the areas of race and social justice. We believe that marriage and the complete set of rights associated with that legal institution should be available regardless of whether the parties to the marriage are of the same or different genders; at the same time, we acknowledge that a religious entity would not be required to perform marriage ceremonies or recognize unions when doing so would be against the religious tenets of the entity.

### **Revenue, Finance, and General Government**

King County strongly supports maintaining and enhancing local taxing and fee authority and local revenue options. We support fee-based tools to preserve the provision of services by the county assessor's office and new technology tools to provide more efficient service. We also seek the authority to implement a temporary property tax amnesty program. King County supports efforts to develop financing tools for spay and neuter programs that support regional animal services objectives. We also support enhanced additional page recording fees for to offset local governments' recording costs. We seek to preserve our ability to operate our own investment pool. We do not support unfunded mandates on the county. If state responsibilities are shifted onto local governments, we would seek new local governance authority and state financial support or new local revenue tools. Such a shift should be weighed carefully, and

explored only after investigating ways to reduce state requirements as well as local governments' ability to absorb such responsibilities and costs.

King County supports expanding the banking and financial services options available to local governments in meeting their needs. This expansion should provide local governments with the option of using local and smaller financial institutions, while maintaining a high level of safety and security for public funds. King County also supports amending RCW 39.58 to allow credit unions to accept public deposits in a manner consistent with the restrictions of banks and thrift institutions under this statute.

### **Stormwater, Water Quality and Puget Sound Partnership**

We support more holistic implementation of the Clean Water Act, including evaluation of and prioritization of actions at a watershed and Puget Sound scale. We support optional programs that would allow state agencies to approve local stormwater programs as qualified local programs. We also support development of state certification for wetland ecologists. We support state technical assistance and regulatory approval for a wider range of tools and approaches for stormwater treatment and management. We seek refinement of NPDES water quality monitoring requirements to focus on value-added monitoring that is coordinated across permit holders consistent with recommendations of the Stormwater Monitoring Workgroup. We support funding and implementation of the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda, including fees on products that have a clear nexus with water pollution. We also support exploration of new watershed-based, optional funding authorities to support water quality, stormwater, and habitat protection and restoration projects. We support regulatory streamlining and other incentives for public and private projects that will restore functioning shoreline and mitigate stormwater impacts. We support sales tax exemptions for purchase of equipment for reclaimed water and biosolids production and transport.

### **Waste Reduction and Recycling**

We support development of cradle-to-cradle product education, stewardship, recycling, and take-back programs for products for which improper disposal is likely to result in hazardous waste, water quality contamination or other solid waste impacts, including pharmaceuticals and medicines, computers and other electronics, carpet, telephone books, and mercury and fluorescent lighting sources.