



KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

2015 (FY2016) Federal Legislative Agenda

MOTION 14287, ATTACHMENT A *01-26-2015*

King County's top federal priorities represent a commitment to meeting the most critical needs of its residents despite ongoing challenges. These priorities protect essential functions and infrastructure, continue our many areas of innovation and make King County a thriving hub of economic development and job creation. King County's Strategic Plan is the foundation for these federal goals and objectives.

Justice and Safety. Support safe communities and accessible justice systems for all.

Tax Intercept Authority: We support legislation giving the U.S. Department of Treasury authority to intercept tax refunds to pay overdue state and county court-ordered financial obligations including fines, fees and victims' restitution, such as the Crime Victim Restitution and Court Fee Intercept Act.

Preparedness Funding: The County is a national leader in preparedness, and our efforts are primarily supported by federal grants. King County seeks a restoration of funding for grant programs through the Centers for Disease Control Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response and the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Program.

Coordinating Levels of Government: To enhance public safety, we support changes to federal policy that would allow banks to work with state licensed marijuana businesses, such as the Marijuana Business Access to Banking Act. Under current law, banks are prohibited from working with these businesses, which means they are dealing in cash transactions increasing risk of theft and creating other regulatory challenges. While guidance from the Treasury Department last February has helped to address the situation, we seek legislative action that would add certainty for banks and legal marijuana businesses.

Health and Human Potential. Provide equitable opportunities for all individuals to realize their full potential.

Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) Medicaid Rule Change: Today, institutions that have over 16 beds dedicated to serving adults impacted by mental illness or drug addiction are excluded from Medicaid payment unless a waiver is provided. We support a rule change to allow treatment for stays of less than 30 days in a larger mental health or substance abuse treatment facility. We fully support legislation repealing the IMD exclusion altogether.

Inmate Medicaid Eligibility: King County supports legislation allowing an otherwise eligible person who is in custody (pending disposition of charges) to continue receiving Medicaid and other federal health benefits until they are convicted, sentenced and incarcerated. This will help us break the cycle of recidivism and reduce health disparities by continuing coverage for a population of low-income adults with substantial physical, mental health and substance abuse needs.

Coordinated Care: King County seeks a technical fix of federal substance abuse confidentiality rules designed in 1972 to align with HIPAA privacy laws and the HITECH Act of 2009 to allow for streamlined information sharing in order to improve coordination of care and client outcomes.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: King County advocates for full funding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to support dislocated workers, low-income adults, out-of-school youth and youth with significant disabilities. We hope to be an active partner in the development of regulations and throughout the implementation process.

Affordable Care Act Implementation: King County is proud of its efforts to lead the *Coverage is Here King County* campaign. To date, more than 195,000 King County residents have enrolled in health insurance plans because of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The County continues to coordinate county-wide efforts to spread enrollment information and assist the uninsured with enrollment. We support the continued implementation of the ACA at the federal, state and local levels.

Child Nutrition: We believe children should have access to healthy and nutritious foods where they live, play and learn and we support building on the successes of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act in the next reauthorization. Reauthorization will continue essential child nutrition programs including the School Breakfast, National School Lunch, Child and Adult Care Food, Summer Food Service and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Programs and WIC.

Maternal and Child Health: We support continued funding for programs like the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program that serve the public health needs of new and expecting mothers and young children in our communities.

Accessible Public Information: King County supports amending the Communications Act of 1934 to establish signal quality and content requirements of the carriage of public, educational, and governmental channels in order to preserve public access to local government proceedings.

Economic Growth and Built Environment. Encourage a growing and diverse King County economy and vibrant, thriving, and sustainable communities.

Transportation: The federal government is an important partner in helping the County maintain robust, multimodal mobility which is critical to economic growth and community livability in King County. The County supports:

- Maintaining existing federal funding streams for transportation,
- Reauthorization of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st including focus on the State of Good Repair infrastructure program and transit systems,
- Increased funding for the Federal Highway Trust Fund and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants,
- Dedicated funding to address aging local and county bridges,
- Resources for robust multimodal programs and infrastructure through both directly distributed and competitive federal funds that are critical to the economic growth and community livability of the County,
- A commitment to and support for funding to preserve local and regional aging roadway and bridge infrastructure, as well as maintaining existing transit mobility while growing bus rapid transit systems.

Hiram M. Chittenden Locks: The Hiram M. Chittenden Locks maintain the water level of the fresh water Lake Washington and Lake Union at 20 to 22 feet above sea level and are an essential navigation link to the Puget Sound. The locks are vital to commerce in the region as they are heavily used by commercial and recreational vessels and are a major tourist attraction. The locks are in critical need of replacement of the 100 year old gate valves as well as a study of a permanent solution to prevent adult salmon from being caught in the diffuser well of the fish ladder.

Levees: King County continues to seek regulatory certainty and engagement of the US Army Corps in the adoption of a System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) that allows jurisdictions to develop a long-term plan for levee stability and public safety while taking into account regional differences. We look forward to working with the Army Corps of Engineers as they implement language on levee vegetation included in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act.

Eastside Rail Corridor: King County seeks federal support for the regional effort to design and develop key connections and compatible uses for the Eastside Rail Corridor which integrates economic development, transportation and utility needs. At this time, no federal program adequately meets the funding or eligibility needs of this project. King County supports consideration of revisions to federal transportation and other funding sources to better enable them to support multiple-use corridor projects like the ERC.

Environmental Sustainability. Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.

Lower Duwamish Cleanup: In collaboration with our partners, we support an approach to the Lower Duwamish Waterway cleanup that reduces human health risks as quickly as possible while minimizing construction impacts on local neighborhoods, human health and economic development. The County seeks support for an appropriate decision from the EPA on Superfund Cleanup of the Lower Duwamish Waterway that meets these goals and does not add additional cleanup actions that are costly and offer few environmental or health benefits.

Pacific Coastal Salmon: The Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund has been a significant source of funding for King County's ecosystem capital improvement program to design and construct salmon restoration projects. The County, the lead entity for salmon recovery coordination in WRIAs 8 and 9, supports continued funding for the PCSRF in FY2016.

Oil and Coal Mining and Transport: The County requests that federal decisions relating to coal and oil include the complete lifecycle costs and benefits of mining, transport and export, including economic, environmental, health and infrastructure impacts.

Clean Water and Puget Sound Recovery: We support responsible and innovative stewardship of our watersheds, the Puget Sound, and our other natural resources, including efforts to designate Puget Sound as a "Great Waterbody" to make it a formal Clean Water Act program through such legislation as the Puget Sound Recovery Act.

Mountains to Sound Greenway and the Skykomish Initiative: King County supports legislation to designate the Mountains to Sound Greenway as a National Heritage Area. This designation would provide the recognition and resources needed to conserve the Greenway for future generations. We also support legislation furthering our commitment to the economic development, recreation and conservation efforts outlined in the Skykomish Initiative.

For additional information, please contact:
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