



King County

Reagan Dunn

Councilmember, District 9

Metropolitan King County Council

January 30, 2023

Sen. Manka Dhingra, Chair
Senate Law and Justice Committee
239 John A. Cherberg Building
Olympia, WA 98501

Sen Mike Padden, Ranking Member
Senate Law and Justice Committee
215 Legislative Modular Building
Olympia, WA 98501

Rep. Roger Goodman, Chair
House Community Safety, Justice &
Reentry Committee
436B Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98501

Rep. Gina Mosbrucker, Ranking Member
House Community Safety, Justice &
Reentry Committee
431 John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA 98501

Re: SB 5533 & HB 1363 Concerning vehicular pursuits.

Dear Chair Dhingra, Ranking Member Padden, Chair Goodman, and Ranking Member Mosbrucker:

As you consider SB 5533 and HB 1363 concerning vehicular pursuit, I would like to share the impact that restrictions on vehicular pursuit have had on public safety in King County and urge your committee to pass legislation to reverse this disastrous policy.

In 2021, the State Legislature passed HB 1054, which restricted police officers' ability to pursue suspects unless they can establish probable cause for a violent offense. This high threshold has severely restricted law enforcement's ability to engage those who are actively committing a crime, and criminals have used this to their advantage. Under HB 1054, suspects are now permitted to drive a stolen car or flee the scene of a crime, knowing that law enforcement are not legally allowed to pursue them.

Here in King County, we have seen a threefold increase in the number of "elude, no pursuit" incidents, surging from 168 in 2020 to 518 in 2022. This is an unacceptable figure for our communities who deserve to be safe in their own neighborhoods. State lawmakers must act now to fix this dangerous policy.

Prior to the 2021 legislation, King County had internal policies about vehicular pursuit that balanced public safety and police restraint. There are plenty of risks involved in vehicular pursuits, and it is important to ensure that there is proper discretion and oversight to ensure the

safety of both the suspect and the pursuing officer. However, HB 1054 disrupts this balanced approach by sending a message to the entire state that if you fail to stop for law enforcement, you will not be pursued.

HB 1363 provides the needed fix. It's a bipartisan effort that would afford police officers greater discretion when pursuing suspects and would send a message to criminals that breaking the law won't be tolerated. While SB 5533 takes steps in the right direction, it falls far short of addressing the immediate public safety needs of the people of King County and of Washington State.

I urge you to take action this session to address the public safety crisis created by the existing vehicular pursuit laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reagan Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Reagan Dunn
Vice Chairman
Metropolitan King County Council

cc: House Community Safety, Justice & Reentry Committee