



Snohomish County

County Council

Jared Mead, Chair
Nate Nehring, Vice-Chair
Sam Low
Megan Dunn
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County Executive
Dave Somers

January 24, 2024

The Honorable Lisa Janicki
Commissioner, Skagit County
WSAC President
1800 Continental Pl., Suite 100
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
ljanicki@co.skagit.wa.us

RE: Snohomish County dues to the Washington State Association of Counties for 2023 and thereafter

Dear President Janicki,

On behalf of Snohomish County, we would like to express our concerns regarding the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) organization and relay our intent moving forward with our membership and engagement. Snohomish County has a long history of valuing the relationship and collaboration with the WSAC organization and ultimately would like to see a solution that keeps all 39 counties well represented and part of the organization.

Unfortunately, because of the WSAC 2023 Annual Membership meeting where many of the proposals to maintain full County participation and membership were rejected, we no longer see ourselves as valued by the organization and gaining value from our continued membership. At this time, we would like to inform the body that without a weighted voting system or a proportionate governance structure for the Executive Board and the Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) tied to dues, Snohomish County will be re-evaluating our relationship with WSAC.

We have not made this decision lightly. We have worked diligently over the last year through the By Laws Committee and the Executive Board to try and find a path forward for all counties, but unfortunately, the organization has not found a workable solution. Snohomish County believes we are stronger together; however, the current dynamics of the organization have created division among us and that was reflected by the tone and tenor of the Annual Meeting. Unless there is a change to the bylaws for voting methods and representation we cannot continue to engage with the organization at our current level.

Policy engagement and creation is one of the major strengths of WSAC when it reflects the priorities and issues of all 39 counties. However, the current structure does not create a mechanism that ensures WSAC policy and legislative agendas represent all member counties' interests. Since the

organization's positions do not always reflect those of the County and our taxpayers, we struggle to justify paying substantial dues to an organization that has not adequately addressed the issues we face. For Snohomish County to continue its full WSAC membership, a weighted voting system or proportional government structure must be put into place to ensure that all counties and their taxpayers are equitably represented at the WSAC table.

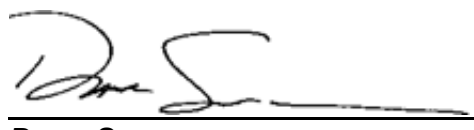
Should WSAC not implement the changes described above, Snohomish County will only pay half of our dues for 2024 and anticipates not paying all or a portion of dues for 2025. We understand the impact this will have on WSAC and wanted to provide the organization adequate time for either changes to occur, or for WSAC to plan to move forward without our future dues.

While we remain hopeful that we can find a solution, we also feel a responsibility to reevaluate our investment in WSAC. Snohomish County should only fund organizations that represent our positions equitably, and as previously stated, that is not reflected in the current structure and dynamic of WSAC. We look forward to working together to hopefully find a solution that works for all counties in the WSAC organization.

Sincerely,



Jared Mead
Council Chair



Dave Somers
County Executive

cc: First Vice-President Rob Coffman
Second Vice-President Mark Ozias
Immediate Past President Mark Kuney
Commissioner Michael Largent
Commissioner Scott Hutsell
Commissioner Wes McCart
Commissioner Dan Sutton
Commissioner LaDon Linde
Commissioner Art Swannack
Commissioner Janet St. Clair

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Councilmember Jani Hitchen
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Commissioner Will McKay