

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Whatcom County Council

**THROUGH:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

**FROM:** Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive

**RE:** 2023 State Legislative Priorities

**DATE:** October 19, 2022

---

### Background

The Washington State Legislature will convene on Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup> for a 105-day session.

Odd number years are the start of the legislative biennium and represent more opportunity for local governments to advance policy and budget priorities. During the 2023 session, the legislature will negotiate the 2023-2025 operating, capital, and transportation budgets. Washington State economy continues to expand but inflation remains high and housing has weakened. The most recent [September 15 revenue projection](#) for the current two-year budget period decreased its forecast, by \$43 Million. Overall, due to forecasted reduction in housing activity and personal income the projections for the 2023-2025 biennium have been lowered, by \$495 million.

McBride Public Affairs jointly represents Whatcom County, the City of Bellingham, and the Port of Bellingham in Olympia. County elected leaders and staff also participate in the Washington State Association of Counties (WASC) and the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO), which track state legislative issues affecting local governments and their constituents.

WSAC is set to vote on its draft legislative priorities at the County Leaders Conference in November. The list of priorities is expected to include extension of the rural counties' public facilities tax (.09), establishing a statewide standard for behavioral health network advocacy, and funding for jail facilities, among other things.

### 2023 Legislative Priorities

The Administration has worked with McBride Public Affairs, Bellingham, and the Port to develop a set of draft legislative priorities. The Administration brings the **attached** list of priorities forward to Council to gather input and discuss the priorities.

The Administration looks forward to discussion on the priorities at the October 25<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Please feel reach out to me or Executive Sidhu with any questions.