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**PROPOSED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**INTRODUCTION DATE:** JULY 12, 2022

**ORDINANCE NO.** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROVIDING FOR SUBMISSION TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY A PROPOSITION RENEWIING THE LEVY OF A REGULAR PROPERTY TAX EACH YEAR FOR SIX YEARS, COLLECTION BEGINNING IN 2023, AT A RATE OF \$.295 OR LESS PER \$1000 OF ASSESSED VALUATION TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, IN THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 3, 2022**

**WHEREAS,** Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a complex, coordinated response and Emergency Medical Care system, that requires people and agencies to perform an essential role as part of a coordinated, tiered, and seamless system of integrated emergency medical care; and

**WHEREAS,** fire districts, departments and agencies provide first responder services and Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance service and the Bellingham Fire Department and Whatcom Fire District #7 provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service; and

**WHEREAS,** Whatcom County's EMS system has evolved over 48 years, and has transitioned into a tiered level of services supported by the countywide EMS Levy; and

**WHEREAS,** the countywide Emergency Medical System serves all of Whatcom County including Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas; and

**WHEREAS,** the EMS system responds to a broad range of people who will benefit from responders reflecting the diverse communities of Whatcom County; and

**WHEREAS,** Emergency Medical Services are essential and necessary for the protection and health and life of Whatcom County residents, and stable funding through the countywide Levy is a practical solution to continue providing EMS services at the current level as described in the 2023 to 2028 EMS Levy Strategic Plan in order to sustain the system into the future and to meet increased demands for service.

**WHEREAS,** the EMS system also includes regional support programs and services that provide administration, medical oversight and direction, citizen and emergency personnel training, planning, public education, and other support programs and services; and

**WHEREAS,** investing in programs and services to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, including training and dedicated personnel to improve and track progress on recruitment and retention, hiring practices, and a workplace culture of inclusion may enhance EMS service delivery and better assist those in need; and

**WHEREAS,** The EMS Levy Planning Committee confirmed by the Emergency Medical Services Oversight Board (EOB) recommended a funding strategy and levy rate that will support and sustain the countywide EMS system; and

1           **WHEREAS**, the state legislature, through RCW 84.52.069, has recognized the needs  
2 and concerns described above, and has provided the mechanism for achieving a stable  
3 funding source for the provision of such Emergency Medical Services through a voter  
4 approved levy, and  
5

6           **WHEREAS**, supporting the EMS Levy, as a primary funding mechanism for  
7 countywide EMS, is key to advancing Whatcom County’s diversity, equity, and inclusion  
8 priorities; and  
9

10           **WHEREAS**, The EMS Levy Planning Committee and EMS Oversight Board  
11 recommends the continuation/renewal of the countywide EMS Levy to provide a stable  
12 funding source that will sustain the system for the next 6 years; and  
13

14           **WHEREAS**, in order to assure the continued provision of services, it is both  
15 necessary and appropriate to renew the regular property tax of \$.295 or less per \$1000 of  
16 assessed valuation be levied as provided for in this ordinance;  
17

18           **WHEREAS**, if the voters approve the proposed renewal of the EMS levy, for the tax  
19 year 2023, the property tax levy rate would be set at \$0.295 per \$1,000 of assessed  
20 valuation; and  
21

22           **WHEREAS**, beginning in the 2024 tax year and for the remaining tax years of the  
23 levy, the County Council would have the opportunity to review and potentially reduce the  
24 EMS property tax levy in its annual EMS property tax levy ordinance, if the Council  
25 determines that EMS needs can be fully met with a lower levy;  
26

27           **NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF WHATCOM COUNTY DOES ORDAIN AS**  
28 **FOLLOWS:**  
29

30           **Section 1. Approval of cities over 50,000 population.** Pursuant to RCW 84.52.069,  
31 approval to place this county-wide levy proposal on the ballot has been obtained from the  
32 legislative body of the City of Bellingham through Resolutions 2022- \_\_. The City of  
33 Bellingham is presently the only city in Whatcom County having a population over 50,000.  
34

35           **Section 2. Deposit of levy proceeds and eligible expenditures.** All levy proceeds shall  
36 be deposited into the County Emergency Medical Services Fund. If approved by the  
37 qualified electors of the County, all levy proceeds authorized in the ordinance shall be used  
38 only for the provision of emergency medical services, including related personnel costs,  
39 training for such personnel and related equipment, supplies, vehicles, and structures needed  
40 for the provision of emergency medical services, and as may otherwise be provided under  
41 RCW 84.52.043. Where permissible by law, personnel costs and training should also include  
42 essential diversity, equity and inclusion components of recruitment, hiring, retention, and  
43 training of personnel.  
44

45           **Section 3. Type of Levy.** Pursuant to the authorization in RCW 84.52.069, this levy is a  
46 regular property tax levy on all taxable property located in Whatcom County and is in  
47 addition to the statutory tax rate limit of RCW 84.52.043.  
48

49           **Section 4. Levy Rate.** The proposed levy rate submitted to the voters shall be \$.295 or  
50 less per \$1000 of assessed valuation each year, for six consecutive years, beginning in  
51 2023. The collections of the taxes will begin in 2023. Taxes will be based on the previous  
52 year’s assessment.  
53

1 **Section 5. Ratification by the Electorate.** The proposal for this levy shall be submitted to  
2 and approved by the voters in accordance with RCW 84.52.069.

3  
4 **Section 6. Call for Election.** A ballot measure for a proposition authorizing the levy  
5 described herein shall be submitted to the qualified voters of Whatcom County at the  
6 general election to be held on November 3, 2022. The Whatcom County Auditor is hereby  
7 authorized, directed, and empowered to cause notices of this ordinance and such election in  
8 accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the registered  
9 voters of the County, at the special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth.  
10 Furthermore, the County Executive is hereby authorized and requested to initiate the  
11 appropriate action necessary to ensure a proposition in substantially the following form shall  
12 be submitted to the voters of Whatcom County:

13  
14 Whatcom County, Washington

15  
16 Proposition \_\_\_\_\_: Regular Property Tax  
17 Levy for Emergency Medical Services  
18

19 The Whatcom County Council passed Ordinance 2022-\_\_\_\_\_ concerning the  
20 renewed funding for the countywide Emergency Medical Services system. Will Whatcom  
21 County will be authorized to continue to impose a regular property tax levy of \$0.295 or less  
22 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for each of the six consecutive years, with  
23 collection beginning in 2023, for the continued provision of emergency medical services?  
24

25 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
26 No \_\_\_\_\_  
27

28 **Section 7. Authorization for Interlocal Agreements.** The County Executive is hereby  
29 authorized and requested to negotiate interlocal agreements: 1) with the City of Bellingham  
30 and Fire District #7 for EMS services consistent with the recommendations of the EMS Levy  
31 Planning Committee and the EMS Oversight Board; 2) and Whatcom County Fire Districts  
32 where levy collections provide fire agencies with limited BLS funding consistent with RCW  
33 84.52.069 relating to the provision of emergency medical services over the length of time  
34 the levy in imposed.  
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1 **Section 8. Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person  
2 or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the  
3 provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.  
4

5 **ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.  
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8  
9 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

10  
11 \_\_\_\_\_  
12 Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council  
13

\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Donovan, Council Chair

14  
15  
16 APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

17  
18 \_\_\_\_\_  
19 Karen Frakes  
20 Civil Deputy Prosecutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Satpal Sidhu,  
County Executive

( ) Approved ( ) Denied

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
26  
27