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Hank Maleng, President
Racheal Carlson, Vice President
Bill Hewett, Secretary
Josh Evans, Treasurer

Whatcom County Association of Fire Chiefs

Whatcom County Council
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Whatcom County Fire Chiefs Association, we write to express our strong support for the unanimous action taken our Boards of Fire Commissioners urging the County Council to utilize the full banked capacity for the county-wide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) levy. As fire chiefs serving jurisdictions throughout Whatcom County, we stand with our elected Commissioners in recognizing the critical importance of this action for the sustainability of our regional EMS system.

As you know, EMS funding in Whatcom County is primarily supported by the voter-approved county-wide EMS levy. The current levy rate of approximately \$0.220 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation is significantly below the maximum authorized rate of \$0.295 per \$1,000 as approved by the voters in November of 2022 at a majority of 63.95%. This gap undermines the ability of EMS providers to meet rising service demands, absorb increasing operational costs, support essential staffing, and replace critical equipment. Restoring levy collections through the full use of banked capacity is necessary to ensure reliable staffing levels, training, readiness, and response times for residents across the county.

Without this action, the long-term sustainability of our county-wide EMS system is at risk, placing undue strain on local fire districts and diminishing the quality of emergency medical care available to the public. Predictable and equitable EMS funding is vital for both urban and rural communities in Whatcom County, especially as our EMS professionals continue to manage rising call volumes and expanding service responsibilities.

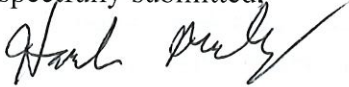
For these reasons, the Whatcom County Fire Chiefs Association respectfully urges the County Council to exercise the authority provided under RCW 84.52.105 and RCW 84.55.092 and take the full banked capacity available under the EMS levy during the 2026 budget cycle (or the current applicable levy year). By doing so, you will help preserve the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of a

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of a regional EMS model that ensures every resident and visitor receives timely, professional, and life-saving medical care.

We deeply value our partnership with the County Council in ensuring strong and resilient emergency medical services for the people of Whatcom County and stand ready to collaborate in supporting this vital funding decision.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hank Maleng", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hank Maleng – President
Whatcom County Fire Chief's Association

From: Hank Maleng <hank.maleng@wcfd16.org>
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 2:06:50 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)
To: Council <Council@co.whatcom.wa.us>
Subject: EMS Levy Banked Capacity

Council Member's

Here is a letter to the Whatcom Co. Council, from the Whatcom Co. Fire Chief's Association.

Thank You,
Chief Hank Maleng
Whatcom County Fire District 16
(360)739-1368

My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56