

# Legislative Update: Preliminary Results

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PRESENTER:

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# Operating Budget

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- **\$2.1 million is provided to the Whatcom County Superior Court for extraordinary costs of the Nooksack River adjudication.**
- Over \$600 million is cut from the Working Connections Child Care program across the 4-year budget outlook.
- Foundational Public Health Services are not reduced.
- \$100,000 is provided to the Health Care Authority to create a statewide implementation roadmap and funding plan for crisis relief centers and crisis stabilization units, which is due to the Legislature by 12/1/26.



# Operating Budget

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- **Whatcom County behavioral health co-response is reduced by 30%.**
- Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion funding is reduced by 30% (\$1.4 million).
- The Recovery Navigator Program is reduced by 10% (\$6 million).
- \$200 million is planned for distribution to cities and counties as mitigation for reduced sales tax collections as a result of reductions in the millionaire's tax bill. This funding begins in 2029 after the millionaire's tax goes into effect.



# Capital Budget

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- **The Whatcom County Crisis and Treatment Center has changed in title, been appropriated \$11.2 million, and moved to the “Revitalized Local and Community Projects” category in the Department of Commerce Budget.**
- \$5 million is provided for low-income home rehabilitation projects in any flood impacted areas of the state.
- \$10 million is provided for the Public Works Board to make emergency grants to local governments for public works projects that were impacted by the December emergency.
- **\$13.05 million Nooksack Integrated Floodplain**



# Capital Budget

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- \$2 million is provided for county flood risk and assessment needs. Counties can receive up to \$300,000 for a risk and needs assessment addressing flood response, preparedness, and prevention. Grants are provided solely for counties impacted by the December emergency proclamation.
- \$3.1 million is provided through the Military Department for grants to counties to address the removal of debris in rivers and other waterways related to the flood event.



# Transportation Budget

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- \$2 million is provided through the Military Department to assist owners of recreational vehicles damaged or destroyed by the December 2025 flood event.
- \$30 million is provided for loans through the County Road Administration Board for financial assistance to county infrastructure that was damaged from the flood. The funding is described as a temporary loan program to bridge counties until federal reimbursement is received. Counties must pay back a loan after receiving federal reimbursement.



# Ferry District Legislation

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- HB 2588: Concerning county ferry district authority
- Allows for ferry district to fund vehicle ferry systems
- Requires ferry districts to be countywide
- Allows for councilmanic adoption of levy up to 10 cents per \$1000AV, public vote required for higher amounts
- Discussion on potential creation of ferry district anticipated at late April or early May Council meeting



# Next Steps

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- Many things still waiting for Governor's signature.
- Final 2026 legislative session report and update expected on May 24.
- Thinking ahead about 2027 session.

