



STATE OF WASHINGTON

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To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 3 and 5, Second Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5659 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to authorizing additional funding for local governments;"

This bill responsibly addresses a growing problem in Washington State – the gap between local government revenues and expenses. It provides two different mechanisms for localities to deal with this situation. Both approaches have a common feature; they allow the taxes to take effect only if voters approve them.

However, two sections of the bill are unrelated to its title, “an act relating to authorizing additional funding for local governments,” which could jeopardize the constitutionality of the entire act. Sections 3 and 5 amend the Growth Management Act (GMA). While I realize that various jurisdictions have problems with GMA implementation, any changes to GMA should only be undertaken after careful consideration of relevant issues. It is also questionable whether two counties should receive an extension of the timetable for updating their comprehensive plans without clearer comparison to other counties’ problems in meeting their deadlines for such updates.

I hereby direct my staff to work with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and with concerned stakeholders over the next five months on potential amendments to the GMA. The deliberations should focus on how we can meet the goals of the GMA, plan for economic development, and protect our environment, while recognizing the difficult fiscal conditions facing so many local governments. The stakeholders should include a representative group of cities and counties, as well as the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties. It is my intention that we bring to the 2004 Legislature a set of GMA amendments that can be adopted with broad support.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 3 and 5 of Second Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5659.

With the exception of sections 3 and 5, Second Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5659 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Locke
Governor