Federal Legislative Priorities

AWC Position

Washington cities urge our Congressional Delegation to work toward solving the fiscal dilemma facing our nation. Neither party can fix this problem on their own, and we seek a balanced approach that relies on tax reform, spending cuts, and revenue increases. Allowing sequestration to dictate budget priorities for domestic spending and defense is harming our nation, our state, and our cities. Our cities depend on a strong federal partnership on health, public safety, housing, and human services. Furthermore, Washington State’s economy includes significant defense bases and investments that are harmed by indiscriminate cuts resulting from sequestration. We realize Congress must make difficult funding decisions; however, please avoid unfunded mandates that negatively impact local governments.

Advance the Marketplace Fairness Act

- Enact legislation that would grant states the authority they need to require sellers, regardless of location, to collect sales and use taxes owed to them at the point of destination for the sale per the Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement.
- Strongly oppose the inclusion of mandatory requirements for state collection and administration of local telecommunication taxes.

Protect the Tax Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds

- Resist efforts to limit or eliminate the federal income tax exemption on municipal bonds, which will increase local financing costs and decrease infrastructure investments.

Invest in Infrastructure

- Ensure MAP-21 successor legislation adequately funds a comprehensive national surface transportation plan.
- Promote a multimodal network for the environmental, social, and economic development of our country.
- Ensure the sustainability of both the highway and mass transit accounts within the federal Highway Trust Fund.
- Fund improvements along rail freight corridors, including grade separations and other safety measures, and improve rail safety with a more robust tank design.
- Provide adequate, predictable, and long-term funding for airport capital and development projects by increasing the passenger facility charge.
- Invest in local infrastructure programs, such as the Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Funds, as a way to put people back to work.
- Fund communications infrastructure and provide incentives that encourage telecommuting as a Transportation Demand Management strategy.
- Support partnership between federal, state, and local governments that acknowledge local decision-making authority.

Maintain Community Development Funding

- As one of the most important and flexible federal funding sources, resume funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at historic levels of $4.5 billion.
- Resist further reductions to the HOME Investment Partnerships program.
- Maintain funding of the Homeless Assistance Grant program to help those who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

Ensure Safe Communities

- Support continued necessary federal funding for programs such as the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants (SAFER), and Local Law Enforcement Block Grants.
- Fund pilot programs to assist municipalities in developing creative solutions to combat crime and gangs.

AWC Position

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