



AWC 2009 Major Legislative Priorities

On November 21, 2008, the AWC Board adopted an ambitious legislative agenda for this upcoming session. The seven major legislative priorities that will be presented to the Legislature by AWC and city officials fall under these three key themes:

- Maintaining and developing quality infrastructure for safety and development;
- Promoting city fiscal health and flexibility; and
- Providing for flexible general government operations.

The 2009 session will be like no other in the last 25 years given the projected \$5.7 billion state budget deficit. Success on the following issues will be difficult and only possible with significant direct city official assistance.

Maintain and Develop Quality Infrastructure for Safety and Development

It is in the state's interest to help cities develop and maintain a strong infrastructure system that promotes economic development and provides the state and cities needed revenues. In addition, as public works become more complex, cities need more management flexibility.

Major priority:

Infrastructure funding

- **State infrastructure funding:** AWC will continue to pursue funding for infrastructure programs including:
 - Local Infrastructure Finance Tool (LIFT)
 - Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - Communications Infrastructure-Interoperability
 - Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
 - State Brownfield Redevelopment Funding
- **Local infrastructure options and flexibility:** AWC will pursue local options to enhance transportation and economic opportunities for cities including:
 - Modify Alternative Public Works statutes
 - Modify current architect/engineering services statutes

- Update bid limits authority
- Support enabling Community Facilities District legislation
- Modify Community Revitalization Financing statutes
- Harmonize use of 1st and 2nd quarter local Real Estate Excise Tax
- Pursue Street Utility authority
- Modify the Transportation Benefit Districts statutes
- **Stormwater funding:** The state needs to partner with cities to help fund implementation of NPDES permits at levels greater than the 2007-2009 biennium. AWC will seek such financial assistance.

Promote City Fiscal Health and Flexibility

Cities need broad discretion in using existing revenue sources to respond to local challenges. It's critical that cities and towns also have the authority to look for new and innovative strategies and resources.

Major priority:

Fiscal health

- **Sales tax:** AWC will seek to allow cities to levy the .3 percent voter-approved public safety sales tax, independent of county action, and remove supplanting language and the requirement that one-third of funds be spent solely for criminal justice purposes.
- **Property tax:** AWC will seek an increase of the property tax cap of 1 percent for city EMS permanent levies, using inflation as the cap. In addition, AWC will assist the counties in obtaining state resources so every county can conduct annual valuations.
- **Fiscal aid for distressed cities and counties:** AWC will seek an increase to the City-County Assistance Account and establish a "floor" so distributions to qualifying cities do not drop below a certain amount.

continued

Provide for Flexible General Government Operations

It's critical that cities have the flexibility and local decision-making authority to make the right decisions for their citizens. Cities must be able to develop service delivery tools in a way that's cost-effective, efficient and flexible—and free from unwarranted restraint.

Major priorities:

Oppose the requirement to tape executive sessions and any restrictions of attorney-client privilege or attorney work product

Cities will continue to oppose a requirement to tape all executive sessions and any attempt to restrict attorney-client privilege or attorney work product.

Annexation and city/county governance transition

AWC will advocate for more annexation tools to facilitate annexations within urban growth areas and promote incentives to facilitate agreement among a city and county to jointly plan for and have consistent development regulations in unincorporated urban areas.

Limiting liability for local government

AWC will continue to pursue reforms that limit joint liability for public entities; work to amend the law so that juries may be informed of seatbelt use; and support other entities that wish to advance legislation relating to establishing a willful and wanton level of misconduct for emergency workers.

Land use/gambling

AWC will defend cities' ability to fully ban gambling and seek legislation that provides cities the ability to zone and partially ban gambling facilities

City flexibility package

AWC will pursue proposals that support flexible and cost-effective options for cities to provide essential services.



1076 Franklin St SE
Olympia, WA 98501
www.awcnet.org