



# 2018 Legislative candidate survey

Candidate name: Jim McEntire Legislative district: 24th

You are a candidate for: House of Representatives  Senate

If you are a candidate for the House of Representatives, which position are your running for? Position 1  Position 2

## Local government background

Have you ever been elected or appointed to a local government position, or served on a local government board, committee, or as staff? *Local governments include cities, counties, public utility districts, school districts, fire protection districts, port districts, and more.* Yes  No

If yes, in what capacity?

Commissioner, Port of Port Angeles, 2008 through 2011; and Clallam County Commissioner, 2012 through 2015.

## 1. State-shared local revenues

When the state encounters fiscal problems, legislators often take revenues historically shared with cities, or increase fees on services provided to cities to fill the state's budget deficit. Recently, some shared revenues have been restored. However, during the last recession, the Legislature enacted cuts and diversions, while unfunded mandates and other local government cost drivers remained unaddressed, including the following items:

- Changes in liquor tax and profit distributions resulting in losses of nearly \$200 million in funds that supported essential local services, such as public safety;
- Sweeping and diverting over \$1 billion in local utility taxes, real estate taxes, and project loan repayments from the nationally-acclaimed Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) that helps keep local infrastructure operating; and
- Requiring cities to pay training fees for officers attending the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA).

Do you support or oppose the Legislature continuing to use locally-shared revenues or revenues intended for capital projects in order to balance the state's operating budget? Support  Oppose

**Briefly describe one or more actions that you would take to ensure your views on these issues are accounted for by your caucus and in a final budget.**

RCW 43.135.060 speaks to unfunded mandates and prohibits the legislature from imposing them on local governments. If the State is to have a Public Works funding assistance account, or a toxic cleanup account, those funds should be treated similar to a trust fund, and not as a substitute for general revenues. I will be very reluctant to vote for a Capital Budget that countenances a sweep of such funds, many of which may be sourced originally from State General Obligation debt.

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## 2. Basic infrastructure financing

Cities face many challenges when repairing and updating critical infrastructure such as drinking water and sewer systems. Historically, the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF), a revolving loan fund, was a significant source for financing infrastructure. As the state wrestled first with a recession and then with the *McCleary* education funding challenges, legislators repeatedly turned to diverting these funds and leaving nothing in their place. Since 2013, nearly all of the tax revenues deposited into the PWTF were diverted to the state's education funding account instead. Those revenues were scheduled to come back to the PWTF in 2019, but the revenue diversions were extended another four years.

**Would you support or oppose a budget that diverted more resources from the PWTF to address state general fund obligations?**      Support      Oppose  
     

**Do you believe that it is part of the state's obligation to help fund critical local infrastructure, especially when taxes and fees raised to do so in 1985 continue to be levied?**      Yes      No  
     

**As a lawmaker, how will you work to secure the revitalization of the PWTF and protect it from future raids?**

I'm going to have to understand the tax revenue sources better, which I will do once in the legislature. But as a general matter, if the voters, cities, and counties, etc., were told in the '80s that certain tax revenues were going to be dedicated only to local capital funding projects, then that's where they should stay ... especially since the Growth Management Act's interpretations over time have created hard infrastructure requirements on local governments. All four corners need to have a hard understanding on that point, before the fiscal committees begin their work. I'll ask that the State Auditor be given funding for a performance audit of the local capital assistance accounts that are funded from bond proceeds and dedicated tax revenue sources. I'll be happy to work with AWC and WSAC on this last point.

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## 3. Homelessness, affordable housing, and mental health

Across the state, housing costs are rising and affordability issues are impacting homebuyers and renters, as well as exacerbating the already critical homelessness problems in many communities. Mental health services are stretched thin and cities (not normally in the business of providing these particular social services) find themselves increasingly trying to help residents and keep their communities safe and secure. Cities have a strong desire to work together with the state, counties, business, nonprofit, and faith communities to help address these challenges. We continue to seek financing, regulatory, and funding tools to help.

**Which of the following are priorities for you? Choose all that apply.**

- Help to end homelessness
- Ensure adequate mental health services for those in need
- Provide tools to help control the spiraling cost of housing

**Would you support or oppose a proposal for the state to override local zoning or density decisions to promote more affordability in housing construction?**      Support      Oppose



If you have any questions, please contact Regina Adams, AWC Government Relations Coordinator, at 360-753-4137 or [ReginaA@awcnet.org](mailto:ReginaA@awcnet.org). Please return your survey **by the end of the day on Wednesday, July 4** by:

- Email to [ReginaA@awcnet.org](mailto:ReginaA@awcnet.org);
- Fax to (360) 753-0149; or
- U.S. mail to AWC Candidate Survey, 1076 Franklin Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501-1346.

**Thank you for your participation!**