

Members of the Washington State Legislature:

We write to urge you to pass **SB 5770** to revise the arbitrary 1% property tax cap that has been in place for more than 20 years—over a generation. Due to this cap being lower than inflation, cities are struggling to keep up with rising costs of providing basic community services like police, fire, parks, and streets.

We ask you to support the modest increase to the cap in **SB 5770**. This proposal ties the property tax cap to population growth and inflation up to 3%, a modest change that is more reflective of the last decade's average 3% inflationary growth in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

We understand the reluctance to act on taxes; however, our residents need city funding options to keep up with our growing communities' needs and rising costs for services. **SB 5770** provides a tool that would give elected city officials the ability to determine whether and when to use it for their community's best interests.

Without a change, local governments can't sustain public safety and other basic services to keep up with our residents' needs. In fact:

- **In 2001:** Cities had 1 employee to serve every **80** city residents; and
- **In 2022:** Cities had 1 employee to serve every **110** city residents.

For a generation, local governments have managed to find band-aid solutions to cover this structural deficit while being called on to do more with less—but we are at the tipping point.

Allowing local elected officials to raise their property tax revenues by up to 3% per year puts the decision-making power back into our communities. Local elected officials have a high rate of trust among their constituents, and they are immediately accountable to the voters. Legislative action on this issue in 2024 isn't an automatic tax increase. Instead, it allows for thoughtful local debate and discussion about what will work best for each city.

Now is the time for this change. Cities must continue to provide these important services and cannot wait another 20 years or shift the burden of finding a solution onto the next generation.

Please pass **SB 5770**.

Sincerely,