

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,

Liz Ellis, Councilmember, Aberdeen
Davin Perry, Councilmember, Airway Heights
Troy Linnell, Mayor, Algona
Carolyn Moulton, Mayor Pro Tem, Anacortes
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Nancy Backus, Mayor, Auburn
Larry Brown, Deputy Mayor, Auburn

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Carol Benson, Mayor, Black Diamond
Leih Mulvihill, Councilmember, Black Diamond
Tamie Deady, Mayor Pro Tem, Black Diamond
Tammy Jeffries, Executive Assistant, Bremerton
Valerie Rosman, Councilmember, Brier

Hisham Othman, Councilmember, Brier
Courtney Brunell, City Administrator, Buckley
Denice Bergerson, Councilmember, Buckley
Adolfo Bailon, City Manager, Burien
Kevin Schilling, Mayor, Burien
Jimmy Matta, Councilmember, Burien
Alex Andrade, Councilmember, Burien
Hugo Garcia, Councilmember, Burien
Sarah Moore, Councilmember, Burien
Alex Andrade, Councilmember, Burien
Linda Akey, Councilmember, Burien
Steve Hogan, Mayor, Camas
Jim Ribail, Mayor, Carnation
Adair Hawkins, Deputy Mayor, Carnation
Ryan Burrell, Councilmember, Carnation
Brodie Nelson, Councilmember, Carnation
Jessica Merizan, Councilmember, Carnation
Ana Cortez, City Manager, Carnation
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Chris Grover, Mayor, Cheney
Bruce Nupp II, Councilmember, Chewelah
Steve Friedman, Mayor, Clyde Hill
Blaine Golden, Councilmember, Colfax
Norma Hernandez, Mayor, Colledge Place
Mike Rizzitiello, City Administrator, Colledge Place
Cathleen Koch, City Administrator, Connell
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Linda Springer, Mayor, Cosmopolis
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Smith, Mayor Pro Tem, Covington
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Carma Oaksmith, Finance Director, DuPont
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Paula Rhyne, Councilmember, Everett
Don Schwab, Councilmember, Everett
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Ben Zarlingo, Councilmember, Everett
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Derek Matheson, City Manager, Fife
Kim Roscoe, Mayor, Fife
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Jeni Woock, Councilmember, Gig Harbor
Tracie Markley, Mayor, Gig Harbor

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Lorri Bodi, Deputy Mayor, Lake Forest Park
Tracy Furutani, Councilmember, Lake Forest Park
Larry Goldman, Councilmember, Lake Forest Park
Semra Riddle, Councilmember, Lake Forest Park
Carl Florea, Mayor, Leavenworth
Sue Svendsen, Mayor, Long Beach
David Glasson, City Administrator, Long Beach
Kristina Swanson, City Manager, Longview
Salim Nice, Mayor, Mercer Island
Tara Leininger, Mayor, Metaline Falls
Shanna Styron Sherrell, Mayor, Milton
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Abby Gribi, City Administrator, Newport
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Amy Arrington, City Manager, Normandy Park
Susan J. West, Councilmember, Normandy Park
Sheri Healey, Councilmember, Normandy Park
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Yen Huynh, Mayor Pro Tem, Olympia
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Eric Holmes, City Manager, Vancouver
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Sarah Fox, Councilmember, Vancouver
Ty Stober, Councilmember, Vancouver
Randy Hinchliffe, City Administrator, Waitsburg
Elizabeth Chamberlain, City Manager, Walla Walla
Pamela Taylor, Human Resources Director, Walla
Walla
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Patricia Fink, Councilmember, White Salmon
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