



Washington State Legislature

July 15, 2008

Senator Tracey Eide
Washington State Senate
Legislative Building Room 402
Olympia, WA

Dear Senator Eide:

As the Joint Task Force on Local Funding Options undertakes its first meeting, we want to take this opportunity to bring to your attention an issue we very much would appreciate that the Task Force consider. Since equity in distribution of funds raised will no doubt be part of your discussions, we would like to share with you information about current challenges faced by the residents and communities in South King County.

As you know, South King County is home to Seatac International Airport and numerous hotel, motel, convention and restaurant facilities. It is also a gateway for the tens of thousands of visitors to our region who arrive by air. The proximity of a large number of lodging facilities provides an ease of access for many groups and travelers. What is often overlooked is that this area also is home to a growing and culturally diverse population base that is creating greater demands for access to arts events in this area. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of South King County grew at a rate of twenty percent, the highest growth rate in any King County subregion. Families moving into the area for work or to relocate from both rural and urban areas are seeking opportunities to participate in cultural events and to involve their children in the arts.

Compare the population of different King County regions to the distribution of funding for the arts and the challenge becomes quite clear. South King County has generated 27.7% of the hotel and motel tax revenues. However, only *eight percent* of the total revenues raised countywide stays within the South King County area. To emphasize this disparity, consider that the population of South King County accounts for more than one third of King County residents, yet the allocation of funding is less than ten percent.

It is our view that as you look into various changes in local funding options, that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on keeping tax revenues aligned with population and growth and constructed to meet growing demands.