

December 13, 2021

Dave Somers
Snohomish County Executive
3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 407
Everett, WA 98201

Cc: Snohomish County Council
(Delivered electronically via e-mail)

Dear Executive Somers,

We, the undersigned, have grave concerns regarding the proposed councilmanic increase to the countywide sales and use tax for affordable housing. While we share the desire to address affordable housing issues in our county, the process, as it stands is irresponsible and will erode trust with our shared constituents.

A sales tax to produce affordable housing is counterintuitive and will only further burden residents in Snohomish County. Sales tax is one of the most regressive forms of taxation, creating a disproportionate impact on low- and middle-income families.

We also have concerns with the timing of this proposal. As residents and local businesses continue to recover from the economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, now is not the time to increase their tax burden. Government should be encouraging economic growth and, at the very least, not make it more difficult for businesses and families to recover. Increasing the sales tax at this time makes economic recovery even more difficult.

In addition to the merit of the policy proposal itself, we have significant concerns with the process being used to implement this tax increase. Historically, a proposal like this would need to go to the voters for their consideration. While the legislature allowed local governments to impose this sales tax increase using councilmanic authority, that doesn't mean it is the right thing to do.

We encourage the County Council to place this issue on the ballot and allow the voters of Snohomish County to determine whether this tax increase and proposed spending has merit.

Please do not impose this additional tax burden on Snohomish County residents without their input through a public process and vote.

Sincerely,

Michelle Blythe - Arlington City Councilmember

Marilyn Oertle - Arlington City Councilmember

Don Vanney - Arlington City Councilmember

Jeanne Zornes - Bothell City Councilmember
Dale Kaemingk - Brier Mayor
Martin Krienke - Brier City Councilmember
Dennis Nick - Brier City Councilmember
Mike Gallagher - Brier City Councilmember
Gary Willis - Darrington Town Councilmember
Billie Lee Burtenshaw - Darrington Town Councilmember
Diane Buckshnis - Edmonds City Councilmember
Scott Bader - Everett City Councilmember
Scott Murphy - Everett City Councilmember
Jeff Moore - Everett City Councilmember
Steve Yarbrough - Gold Bar City Councilmember
Matt Hartman - Granite Falls Mayor
David Griggs - Granite Falls City Councilmember
Tom FitzGerald - Granite Falls City Councilmember
Steven Glenn - Granite Falls City Councilmember
Erin Hogan - Granite Falls City Councilmember
Brett Gailey - Lake Stevens Mayor
Kim Daughtry - Lake Stevens City Councilmember
Gary Petershagen - Lake Stevens City Councilmember
Steve Ewing - Lake Stevens City Councilmember
Marcus Tageant - Lake Stevens City Councilmember
George Hurst - Lynnwood City Councilmember
Jim Smith - Lynnwood City Councilmember
Julieta Altamirano-Crosby - Lynnwood City Councilmember
Patrick Decker - Lynnwood City Councilmember
Ruth Ross - Lynnwood City Councilmember
Shannon Sessions - Lynnwood City Councilmember
Jon Nehring - Marysville Mayor

Kamille Norton - Marysville City Councilmember
Jeff Vaughan - Marysville City Councilmember
Mark James - Marysville City Councilmember
Kelly Richards - Marysville City Councilmember
Michael Stevens - Marysville City Councilmember
Tom King - Marysville City Councilmember
Steve Muller - Marysville City Councilmember
Vince Cavaleri - Mill Creek City Councilmember
Mark Bond - Mill Creek City Councilmember
Connie Allison - Mill Creek City Councilmember
Kevin Hanford - Monroe City Councilmember
Bryan Wahl – Mountlake Terrace Councilmember
Riaz Khan - Mukilteo City Councilmember
Joe Marine - Mukilteo City Councilmember
John Kartak - Snohomish Mayor
Larry Countryman - Snohomish City Councilmember
Steve Dana - Snohomish City Councilmember
Nate Nehring - Snohomish County Councilmember
Sam Low - Snohomish County Councilmember
Sid Roberts - Stanwood Mayor
Darren Robb - Stanwood City Councilmember
Steve Shepro - Stanwood City Councilmember
Tim Pearce - Stanwood City Councilmember
Russell Wiita - Sultan Mayor
Mel Sheldon - Tulalip Tribes Board Member
Mike Quinn - Woodway Mayor