

*The Coalition Represents*

8 Chambers of Commerce  
Over 3500 businesses  
with over 204,600 employees  
in 6 state legislative districts



*The East King County  
Chambers of Commerce  
Legislative Coalition is made  
up of the following  
Chambers of Commerce:*

**Bellevue**

**Issaquah**

**Kirkland**

**Mercer Island**

**Northshore**

**Redmond**

**Snoqualmie Valley**

**Woodinville**

East King County  
Chambers of Commerce  
Legislative Coalition

# **2003 Legislative Agenda**

# East King County Chambers of Commerce LEGISLATIVE COALITION

Bellevue • Issaquah • Kirkland • Mercer Island • Northshore • Redmond • Snoqualmie Valley • Woodinville



To our Legislative Delegation:

The East King County Chambers of Commerce Legislative Coalition greatly values and appreciates your willingness to listen to the concerns and interests of our business community. The coalition was formed after the 1993 Legislative Session when it became apparent that a clear and unified business position was needed in East King County. Our position papers this year have a new format to reflect three core areas of legislative priority for the business community. These priorities and terminology are also consistent with recommendations of the Competitiveness Council and the Washington Alliance for a Competitive Economy. We hope that you will use these papers as a guide when dealing with legislation and as an opportunity to seek our support for legislation that comes before you for a vote.

Entering our seventh year, the Coalition includes the Chambers of Commerce from Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Northshore, Redmond, Snoqualmie Valley and Woodinville. The Coalition covers six legislative districts (1st, 5th, 41st, 44th, 45th and 48th) and represents over 3,500 member businesses, which employ over 204,663 people. As Chambers of Commerce, we will continue to advocate on behalf of all business sectors, from professional services, manufacturing and distribution to retail and high-tech. Advancing our economy and being a business friendly state is a core issue that runs across all of our industry sectors. It is these core industries that have brought us the economy and quality of life that we all cherish, and it will be these same core industries that will help get the economy back on track.

Since our creation, we have had a number of opportunities to meet and discuss many of the issues that were of importance to the business community with our East King County legislative delegation. We strongly believe that the success of the Coalition has been dependant on the willingness of our legislators to sit down and talk with us. We appreciate any opportunities that our legislators have provided us in the past and look forward to continued discussions as the 2003 Legislative Session begins.

The Coalition position papers reflect key issues that impact economic prosperity for our state and region. The three position papers deal with economic vitality, infrastructure and human capital.

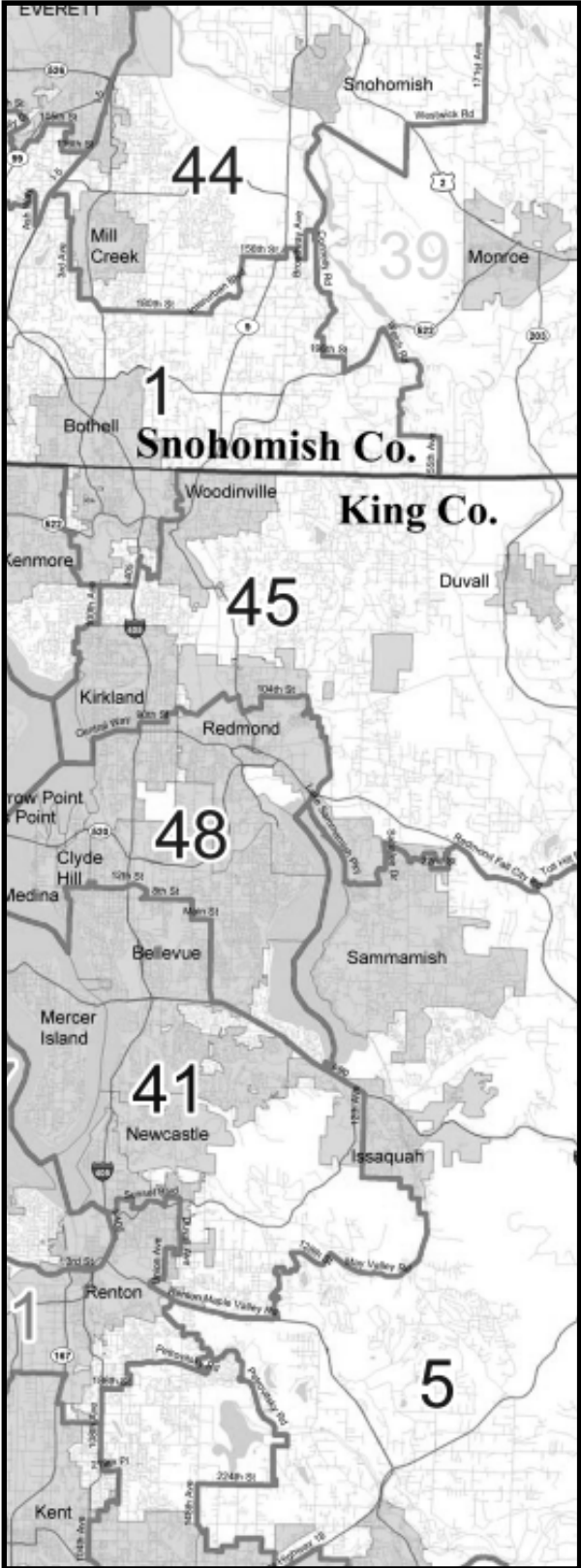
It is important to note, that although we list a few very specific requests for legislation, these positions were intentionally designed to be general. Without these general agreements we cannot provide you with the timely support you request for specific pieces of legislation. We hope that you find these papers useful when dealing with legislation.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our legislative agenda. We look forward to working with you in the coming session.

Todd Woosley, Chair  
East King County Chambers of Commerce Legislative Coalition

**East King County Chambers of Commerce  
LEGISLATIVE COALITION**

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# East King County Chambers of Commerce **LEGISLATIVE COALITION**

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## **Economic Vitality**

### **ISSUE AND BACKGROUND**

Washington State government should take immediate actions to address critical statewide economic challenges that place our citizens, businesses, and services and programs provided or funded by the State, in immediate jeopardy. The State should act swiftly and innovatively to identify and address the impacts of the current economic downturn. Wherever possible, existing programs and departmental delivery systems should be used to accomplish these goals. This will achieve both speed and cost-effectiveness. Collaboration with Federal programs targeted to address the same economic issues should be maximized.

Unemployment, reduced earnings and economic uncertainty have spread throughout the state economy. Tax revenues, sharply reduced in this economy, cannot support either State or local governmental programs at the levels to which they expanded during the preceding years of economic growth. The State should not implement new business-specific taxes and fees, or other taxes that will obstruct economic recovery. State cost cutting, budget and program reductions, and increased efficiencies will be necessary to regain economic stability.

Most importantly, any new legislation must allow for flexible responses to known, emerging, and entirely new and unknown economic challenges we will face in the near-term. Narrowly focused, overly restrictive legislation cannot produce economic benefits in the swift and effective manner necessary to achieve economic recovery. Rulemaking processes need executive oversight. Regulations should be simplified and firmly grounded in cost-benefit analysis and science.

Washington State needs to develop and promote a business climate that is unencumbered by duplicative, ineffective and overly restrictive business regulations. We also need housing that our workers can afford and a fair and consistent tax structure to regain economic vitality and positive growth in living-wage jobs. Access to insurance, at a reasonable cost is necessary for small business to thrive.

Measures to effect long-term economic improvements should not be forgotten. Critical education, infrastructure, transportation and housing concerns need attention. Business laws, regulations, and processes need additional streamlining. Reform in business tax structures, tort liability, and insurance remain necessary to achieve economic vitality and competitiveness.

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## Economic Vitality

### BUSINESS TAXES AND FEES

- Maintain existing, and establish new tax incentives to create more jobs that pay a living-wage consisting of at least the average county wage, full-time work and health care coverage.
- Business tax incentives and credits are a highly effective legislative tool to raise community living standards. Establish performance measures to regularly review the success and validity of tax incentives and credits. This review will ensure that outdated, invalid, and non-performing tax-relief measures are eliminated, retain those that are effective, and provide guidelines for future incentives and credits.
- Increase user fees for narrowly focused State-provided services and amenities, or those that compete with private sector enterprises. These include park fees, facility rentals and leases.
- Establish pricing guidelines to establish fees charged for State services. Such fees should be crafted to cover the costs of routine administration; for example, renewal fees for professional licenses should cover the administrative costs for renewals.
- Do not create separate property residential and business tax roles or transfer a greater tax burden to business.

### BUSINESS REGULATIONS AND RULE MAKING

- Strengthen executive oversight of rulemaking by passing legislation requiring gubernatorial approval of rules and regulations.
- Integrate cost-benefit analysis into all phases of rulemaking.
- Ensure that any proposed rule is linked to its enabling legislation by citation.
- Integrate best available scientific knowledge into all rulemaking, regulations based on unsubstantiated and poorly analyzed data often exacerbate rather than correct problems.
- Emphasize outcomes rather than process in drafting and implementing regulations.

### HEALTH CARE INSURANCE

- Create an 'economy' health insurance plan - a new, more affordable mechanism for employers to provide health-care insurance coverage for workers. To achieve this, it is necessary to amend State-mandated benefits into optional coverage in the economy plan.
- Ensure that employers have a diversity of mechanisms available to enable broad worker access to healthcare coverage. To achieve this:
  - Enact legislation to create small-employer purchasing groups
  - Preserve legislation allowing association plans
  - Continue to support the private, market-driven, health insurance system

### ATTRACT AND RETAIN BUSINESS

- Retain and enhance business tax-relief measures, incentives and credits that make Washington more competitive in attracting and retaining business.
- Enhance State economic and trade development activities that have a proven track record.
- Actively promote Washington State a desirable location for business. The state should consider ways to develop and use tax incentives to keep and grow businesses in Washington. Currently, the state's unique tax system combined with equally unique provisions of the Washington Constitution, limit the state's ability to offer tax incentives to new and expanding companies. (tax increment financing)
- Legislative remedies are required to increase available affordable housing for workers at all income levels, achieving a balance between job and housing growth.
- Prioritize State investments in housing projects in dense population and employment centers that are deficient in moderate and low-income housing.

### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

- Restrict access to benefits for part-time, per diem, temporarily-disabled, or seasonal employees.
- Address both tax and benefit equity issues to keep Washington State competitive.

### STATE GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCIES

- The current economy is unable to support State government at current levels, efficiencies must decrease costs, and judicious cuts in State programs and services will be necessary to return to economic viability.
- The importance of the rainy day fund and its appropriate use in times of economic downturns should be acknowledged and reinforced.
- Single, extraordinary funding, such as last year's use of the Tobacco Settlement are not effective measures to address long-term funding of State programs.
- Eliminate links between contracting-out and State worker collective bargaining.
- Repeal recently expanded collective bargaining rights for State workers on the State budget.
- Improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our State civil justice system.



# East King County Chambers of Commerce **LEGISLATIVE COALITION**

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## **Infrastructure, Land Use & Environmental Regulations**

### **ISSUE AND BACKGROUND**

The Coalition's highest priority is legislative adoption of an integrated transportation program that quickly addresses the State's transportation needs. Reducing traffic congestion, enhancing transportation safety, and improving our existing transportation network are necessary to recapture a vibrant economy. A commitment to following through on recently approved Regional Transportation Improvement Districts, without legislative modifications in the upcoming session, is also vital.

Washington State government will understandably focus, in the short-term, on statewide economic concerns and the State's critical budget shortfalls. Transportation must be considered one of the most critical immediate issues. Additionally, physical infrastructure, natural resources, environmental, and land use issues, often the focus of recent legislative sessions, are still important. They provide the foundation for economic recovery and stability. We encourage appropriate funding of State's existing responsibilities for public infrastructure.

Unwieldy rules and regulations, and burdensome regulatory compliance processes place our economic future at risk. Streamlining regulatory processes must be an ongoing mission of state government. Clearly defining and integrating rules and regulations is a necessary foundation for a strong State economy. Most of the actions we seek would initiate or reinforce activities to clarify rules and regulations, ensure more legislative and executive oversight of rulemaking processes, and streamline planning, review, permitting, and implementation processes. This collaborative and integrated approach would not only provide necessary predictability to businesses and individual citizens, it would direct State Agency's priorities into more cost-effective and efficient operations. Agencies dealing with these important issues need to focus on the results necessary for economic recovery.

Vital employees in business and other employment sectors can no longer afford to live in the Eastside communities in which they work. Over the last decade, this group has grown to include teachers, city, county and State employees, agency directors, office workers, business mid-level managers, and police and fire personnel. In addition, there are those who have filled numerous, newly created, low and moderate income jobs in the service and retail sectors. For businesses to attract and retain employees, housing options need to be available throughout the Eastside to residents from all walks of life and income levels. To accomplish this, measures need to be taken to ensure that urban densities, and associated transportation and public services infrastructures such as water, sewer, storm-water, and wastewater systems develop rapidly. State government needs continued commitment to the housing and transportation goals of the Growth Management Act, and to collaboratively and innovatively translate those goals into an integrated approach to the implementation of rules and regulations regarding physical infrastructure and natural resources.

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## Infrastructure, Land Use & Environmental Regulations

### TRANSPORTATION

- Maintain the integrity of SB 6140 and the creation of Regional Transportation Improvement Districts to ensure that work may proceed in a manner that decisions are presented to voters in 2003
- Develop trust in the Department of Transportation by requiring regular performance and project audits, and placing the position of Secretary under full control of the Governor.
- Develop and pass during this session, a funding package that will address congestion relief on our state highway system. Provide a hedge against inflation by indexing the gas tax.
- Streamline state permitting processes associated with transportation construction and provide leadership in integrating regulatory processes at all levels of government
- Develop strong and effective incentives for local governments to accomplish Growth Management Act (GMA) transportation concurrencies in less than the six years associated with GMA Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs). Allow phased-project options for developers collaborating with local governments to accomplish transportation concurrency on an accelerated timeline.
- Provide effective incentives for local jurisdictions to collaborate to achieve GMA transportation and infrastructure concurrencies. Ensure that non-compliance by local governments incurs serious consequences and sanctions.

### IMPACT AND MITIGATION FEES

- Ensure that impact and mitigation fees designed to finance capital transportation projects, public school construction, and parks, within local jurisdictions, remain restricted to those uses.
- Maintain the current deadlines by which these funds must be either expended or refunded. Encourage local jurisdictions to raise required matching funds in a timely manner.

### HOUSING

- Initiate a collaborative effort to develop, pass and implement legislation to eliminate barriers to the development of condominiums, and other individually owned multi family housing units. Such housing is imperative to meet housing densities mandated by GMA. The needs of insurance providers, developers, builders, owners, and owners' associations should be addressed in ways that minimize the use of the court system to provide remedies due to lack of clarity in State insurance, construction, and condominium rules and regulations.
- Establish effective rewards for cities and counties in compliance with housing targets
- Establish and enforce sanctions for cities and counties out of compliance in meeting housing targets

### PERMITS

- Ensure that data gathering required is in compliance with deadlines associated with by ESHB 1451. Analyze data as soon as possible and develop, pass and implement legislation that established time limits for the issuance of specific types of permits such as tenant improvements, remodels, single- or multi-family construction, and new construction. Consistency and predictability of permitting processes is needed to reduce development and housing costs.
- Provide legislative direction for State agencies to lead efforts in collaborative and conjoined permitting processes with other levels of government

### ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA)

#### AND SHORELINES MANAGEMENT PLANS

- Any measures in excess of the minimum ESA requirements must be driven by voluntary incentive-based approaches
- GMA goals should be integrated into ESA recovery plans
- Ensure ESA actions are not implemented by the Department of Ecology in Shorelines Guidelines
- Funding for Shoreline Management Plan updates must be provided prior to updates being started
- Establish goals for land-based endangered species based on the natural range of each species.
- Establish aquatic species escapement goals by individual Water Resource Recovery Areas (WIRAs). The State should lead efforts to establish collaboration between all levels of permitting agencies for projects requiring ESA or Shoreline compliance and set time limits for the issuance of State permits
- Delisting of endangered species should be the goal of all State recovery plans, clearly defining required population numbers and characteristics to achieve delisting

### WATER

- Clarify State water rights law to allow water providers more flexibility in managing water resources. Provide clear policy direction regarding issues of places-of-use, inchoate water rights, and transferability of water rights.
- Link State water rights law, and resource management rules and regulations to the Growth Management Act (GMA) growth, infrastructure and housing goals.
- Collaborate with the Governor's efforts to develop a regional plan to overcome antiquated governance, management, and legislative tools available to manage water resources.

### ENERGY

- Support the long-term preservation of the economic benefits of low-cost federal power for all citizens of Washington State and the region.
- Facilitate the development of expanded infrastructure to assure sufficient energy supplies and an efficient and reliable energy delivery system to meet the needs of all Washington households and businesses.
- Encourage and support increased use of energy management technologies that will help utilities and individual consumers to achieve greater conservation and energy use efficiencies
- Support continued general budget funding of low-income energy assistance programs during the 2003-2005 biennium. Continue to increase contributions to fully fund low-income energy assistance programs established in the 2001-3 state operating budget
- The State should prohibit the shift of exceptional utility relocation costs from local transportation or economic development projects to utility customers, in compliance with current rates and tariffs.

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## Human Capital

### ISSUE AND BACKGROUND

Providing high quality education at every level is a crucial commitment that our Legislators must make. Consistent, predictable funding and support for K-12 Education, Higher Education and Worker Retraining ensures a steady supply of competent workers who ultimately contribute a healthy return on the state's educational investment.

The Coalition continues to support Education Reform because we believe in the link between an accountable, effective education system and prosperity in our region. We realize that in times of economic uncertainty, all budgets and programs suffer. But we urge legislators to accept that without proper financial support to achieve the superior class experience that our children and adult students need and deserve, the educational system in Washington State will face disastrous, inescapable crises.

In order for businesses to compete on an international playing field and prosper locally, a commitment to education must start at the K-12 level and continue through the university and worker retraining levels. To do this, we must work towards establishing consistent, reliable funding which remains committed, even if and when the state's economy as a whole seems depressed.

### K - 12: THE FOUNDATION OF OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Washington State faces a severe teacher shortage in the K-12 arena, provoked by a wage disparity that prevents our region's educators from living in their schools' districts. California and other states are successfully luring our best teachers away with a simple, reasonable promise: a competitive, living wage. Other industries and professions in our own state are also attracting our teachers, mainly because they can often offer a paycheck that increases commensurate with amplified workloads and greater responsibilities.

We continue our support of the Education Reform Act of 1993 and loudly applaud the idea that educational standards regularly undergo scrutiny. However, we strongly urge the Legislature to admit that raising the bar for academic performance obligates the state to maintain adequate funding to meet these higher standards. Tools and resources are required to ensure that our children succeed in achieving our higher expectations.

### WORKER RETRAINING: PUTTING GOOD PEOPLE IN BETTER JOBS

In recent months, Washington State has seen a disproportionate number of workers lose their jobs. Many of these displaced workers have seized the opportunity to use their "time off" to reinvent their careers through the State's WorkSource program. WorkSource has helped thousands of people get off unemployment sooner, and has given hundreds of businesses access to fresh talent.

As stated above, the business climate in Washington is constantly changing. By encouraging people whose skills are no longer in demand to learn new skills that are, the State saves money in unemployment and welfare expenses, and it perpetuates a constant supply of workers to fill jobs in new or understaffed fields.

The Coalition strongly supports worker retraining and also advocates that businesses that lay off employees do their best to contribute to their workers' retraining efforts. That being said, the Legislature needs to increase retraining funding and financial assistance for downsized employees, especially for people who want to move into industries that face dire shortages, such as teaching and health care.

### HIGHER EDUCATION: THE KEY TO OUR REGION'S SUCCESS

Coalition members rely on our state's higher education system to provide them with well-educated employees. Our state must rededicate itself to the goal of enabling our residents to complete their higher education in a timely manner and with the ultimate result of gainful and sustainable employment. This education should also be targeted to meet business and industry's ever-changing needs.

It is essential that the state manages our regional and research universities, our community and technical colleges, and our public schools as an integrated system for creating and renewing our human capital and capacity for innovation, so that:

- 1) Science and technology from our research institutions renews our current industrial clusters and creates the foundation for businesses of the future by supporting new formation and growth.
- 2) Our colleges and universities produce the top-quality bachelors, masters and doctoral graduates required to sustain existing businesses and attract and create new ones.
- 3) Our community and technical colleges provide new and incumbent workers with the specific skills that they seek and business needs.

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## Human Capital

### K-12 ACTION ITEMS

#### Funding

- Maintain a consistent and predictable level of state K-12 education funding.
- Establish legislation that allows local voters to provide cost of living differentials to teachers.
- Ensure that a higher percentage of state education dollars go towards increasing teacher compensation, versus towards administrative expenses.
- Allow local school districts to collect 100% of the levy funds approved by voters by eliminating the current mandate that rolls back these funds if state and/or federal funding is reduced after the levy is passed.

#### Accountability

- Hold all parties accountable - teachers, parents, students and the community at large - for steady improvement and measurable results and determine if budgetary incentives or penalties are necessary to achieve this goal.
- Develop measures that allow each local community to work with its school district to devise the best ways to reach and exceed state standards for academic performance.
- Continue the efforts made by the A+ Commission on Accountability. Our K - 12 education system must be accountable for providing the opportunities and the methods that will allow each student to learn and succeed.

#### Attraction and Retention

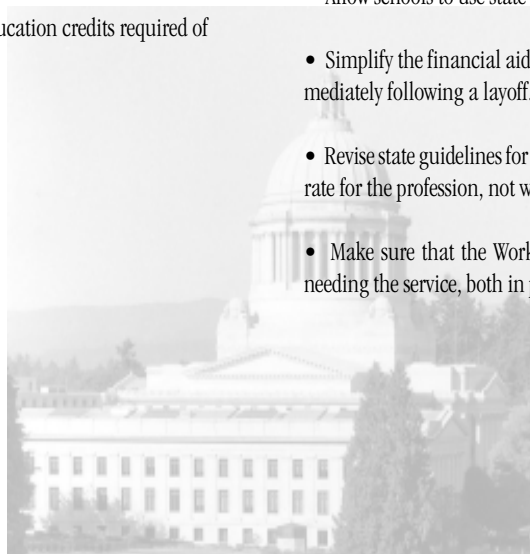
- Immediately enact methods that enable us to attract and retain quality teachers and education professionals in all subjects - especially in math and science - in all school districts.
- Create a loan forgiveness program for Masters in Education at 5% per year for 10 years.
- Minimize the cost impact of mandated Continuing Education credits required of education professionals.

### Higher Education ACTION ITEMS

- Expand capacity at Washington's colleges and universities, particularly in the strategically important fields of science and engineering.
- Provide universities with greater flexibility in setting tuition, so that they may increase faculty salaries and make other investments in strategically important fields.
- Continue focusing on the accountability policies initiated in 1997, which set benchmarks for the graduation efficiency index, five-year graduation rate and overall student retention. The legislature needs to monitor these benchmarks and determine if budgetary incentives or penalties are necessary to achieve them.
- Improve articulation between four-year institutions and community and technical colleges based on best practices here in Washington and in other states.
- Support the study of ways in which higher education institutions can access private funding for capital facilities and still receive state funding for the ongoing maintenance and operation of those facilities.
- Exempt sales tax on research expenditures by universities, including expenditures for construction.
- Ensure that state capital funding is spent efficiently, and that it is directly allocated to appropriate campuses.

### Worker Retraining ACTION ITEMS

- Persuade the federal government to change policies for determining financial need: currently aid is assessed on previous year's income, when it should reflect the applicant's current income.
- Continue adequate funding levels for worker retraining programs.
- Allow schools to use state-allocated money for non-credit classes.
- Simplify the financial aid application process so that people can enter classes immediately following a layoff.
- Revise state guidelines for instructors' salaries so that pay correlates with the going rate for the profession, not with other college instructors.
- Make sure that the WorkSource staff is proportionate to the number of people needing the service, both in processing applications and in job placement.



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## 2002-03 LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

### *District 1*

District 1 covers the cities of:

**Bothell, Woodinville,  
Kirkland, Kenmore,  
Mountlake Terrace,  
Brier, and Lynnwood**



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Rep. Al O'Brien  
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Rep. Jeanne Edwards  
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### *District 5*

District 5 covers the cities of:

**North Bend,  
Snoqualmie, and  
Issaquah**



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Rep. Cheryl Pflug  
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Rep. Glenn Anderson  
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### *District 41*

District 41 covers the cities of:

**Bellevue, Mercer  
Island, Issaquah,  
and Renton**



Sen. Jim Horn  
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**Legislative Homepage**  
<http://www.leg.wa.gov>

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# 2002-03 LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

## *District 44*



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District 44 covers the cities of:

**Mill Creek,  
Snohomish, Lake  
Stevens,  
and Marysville**

## *District 45*



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District 45 covers the cities of:

**Kirkland, Woodinville;  
Redmond, Duvall,  
Carnation, and  
Upper Snoqualmie  
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## *District 48*



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District 48 covers the cities of:

**Bellevue, Kirkland,  
Redmond, Medina,  
Clyde Hill, Yarrow  
Point and Hunts Point**

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**All House Addresses:**  
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# 2003 East King County Chambers of Commerce Legislative Coalition Delegates

## **Bellevue Chamber**

Shannon Boldizar  
Will Einstein  
Kathy Lombardo  
Betty Nokes  
Ellen Post

## **Issaquah Chamber**

Eileen Barber  
Joan Probala  
Suzanne Suther  
Ellen Vaughn

## **Kirkland Chamber**

Linda Holman  
Bob Wicks  
Patti Smith

## **Mercer Island Chamber**

Debora Boeck  
Pat Braman  
Judy Clibborn  
Carol Hinderstein

## **Northshore Chamber**

Natalie Dyer  
Fred Jassy  
Bill Smallwood  
Todd Woosley

## **Redmond Chamber**

Bill Garing  
Marcelle Pechler  
John Resha

## **Snoqualmie Valley Chamber**

Jennifer Lynham  
Lisa Schaffer

## **Woodinville Chamber**

Suzanne Ames  
Bob Brodie  
Dan Ramirez

*A special thanks to the 2003 Coalition Breakfast Sponsors*

