



May 29, 2018

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Dow Constantine
King County Executive
King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

The Honorable Dow Constantine,

The City of SeaTac is expressing our strong concerns and displeasure over your proposed ordinance to reallocate funding from the additional 1% lodging tax for tourism promotion that is scheduled to begin in 2021. It has come to the attention of our City Council that the pro-rata shares previously promised and also directed by State statute to support increased tourism promotion would be re-purposed for non-marketing activities, including ongoing public facility maintenance.

As you well know, travel and tourism are a major economic driver for all of King County and for our city. In the Seattle Southside cities of Des Moines, SeaTac and Tukwila, tourism generates a return on investment of more than \$40 for every dollar spent marketing the region to visitors. Your proposed reallocation of the additional 1% lodging tax reneges on a promise and a mutually agreed upon allocation of funds between arts, housing and tourism promotion. An agreement, which, as you know, your office was directly part of negotiating over a three-year period after several other proposed bills failed in Olympia. Lodging guests staying in the City SeaTac generate over \$1.5 million annually of this additional 1%, and our hoteliers and residents have been patiently waiting for this mutually agreed upon allocation in order to finally see a direct return on this direct contribution.

Our City's ongoing commitment to promoting tourism translates to increased job opportunities, tax receipts, and revenue for our hotels, restaurants, attractions and amenities. The net effect is that tourism saves the average homeowner in our region \$916 in taxes each year.

We will continue to support the original plan to utilize lodging tax dollars for ongoing tourism promotion, 4Culture and affordable housing initiatives only. We strongly object to the callous misuse of these funds for the long-term, ongoing maintenance of a baseball stadium.

Diverting lodging tax dollars from tourism promotion and marketing will negatively impact the economic vitality of our region and do nothing to generate new tourism activity and business that will replenish the fund. Maintenance of a building is not a reinvestment in tourism.

Mayor
Michael J. Siefkes

Deputy Mayor
Erin Sitterley

Councilmembers
Rick Forschler
Joel Wachtel
Peter Kwon
Pam Fernald
Clyde Hill

City Manager
Joseph Scorcio

City Attorney
Mary Mirante Bartolo

City Clerk
Kristina Gregg

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Tourism promotion is an incredibly valuable investment in our community and in south King County, providing economic benefit not just for citizens and businesses, but also for supporting many other community services.

We respectfully ask and strongly urge you to withdraw this proposed raiding and expropriating of tourism funds and explore other avenues for financing the ongoing maintenance of the capital assets of the Public Facilities District.

Sincerely,



Joseph Scorcio, AICP
City Manager

C:

SeaTac City Council
King County Council
State Senator Karen Keiser
State Representative Mia Gregerson
State Representative Tina Orwall
SeaTac Hotel-Motel Tax Advisory Committee
Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority
Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce
Tukwila Mayor and City Council
Des Moines City Manager and City Council