Washington State Association of County Engineers: A Look Ahead at 2022 Legislative Priorities

PRESENTATION TO THE WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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County Roadway Responsibilities

- 39 Counties/39,000 centerline miles
- 59% of Washington roadways
- 45% of Washington bridges
- 4 ferry systems
Counties face **structural revenue challenges** to two key revenue sources, the county road fund property tax and state gas tax:

- Declining share of gas tax allocations.
- Reduced tax base from annexations and incorporations.
- Property tax one percent limit.
- Property tax road fund diversions and shifts.

Meanwhile, county transportation departments face **rising costs**:

- Deferred maintenance costs.
- Increasing gravel costs.
- Environmental regulations.
- Costs to replace bridges at the end of their lifespan.
This gap is around half of county needs for programmatic and capital expenses.

The annual base funding gap for county transportation programmatic and capital needs is $719 million to $1.23 billion.

Beyond this base funding gap:

- Deferred maintenance. Total road deferred maintenance costs for all counties are roughly $4.7 billion and $6.3 billion—around five to six times annual transportation expenditures across all counties.
- Fish passage barrier removal. At least $4.7 billion.
- Investments in safety, ADA, and active transportation.
Legislative Priorities

- Prioritize Preservation and Maintenance
- Increase State Shared Revenue
- Target Increases to the Rural Arterial Program and County Arterial Preservation Program
- Coordinate and Fund Fish Barrier Removal Projects
- Reduce Road Fund Levy Shifts and Diversions
- Create a Federal Fund Exchange Program