



The Voice of Economic Development

WEDA Newsletter – October 2019

Working Together for Jobs & Economic Prosperity Across Washington State

WEDA's 2020 Legislative Agenda is Released

Let's Make It Happen!

After a well-attended WEDA Legislative Retreat in July and a great deal of outreach, discussion and debate, WEDA's leaders have finalized our [2020 State Legislative Agenda](#), continuing our focus on "Working Together for Jobs and Economic Prosperity Across Washington."

WEDA's Legislative Agenda outlines our strategy for retaining, expanding and recruiting jobs and investment across Washington State. The Agenda focuses on the most critical actions lawmakers can take to retain and grow living wage jobs, foster vibrant communities and spark investment in Washington State. WEDA's Top Legislative Priorities for 2020 include:

- 1) **Strengthening the Economic Development Ecosystem** – supporting state-level leadership in economic development and investing more in regional and local capacity to grow jobs, including Commerce's proposed Global Washington program and full funding of the ADO/EDC network. In 2019 the Legislature funded a partial restoration of regional economic development funding, funding 1/3 of WEDA's \$3 million requested restoration to 2008 funding levels.
- 2) **Fostering Catalysts for Job Growth & Competitiveness** – restoring the Strategic Reserve Fund which was reduced in the 2019 session, advocating for public works programs designed to support expanding businesses, increased investments in roads/transit infrastructure and services including opposing Initiative 976 protecting targeted incentives for aerospace and expanding these to all manufacturing.
- 3) **Increasing Prosperity Across All of Washington** – supporting policies and investments that ensure that all parts of the state benefit in increased prosperity such as extension and expansion of the Sales & Use Tax for Public Facilities in Rural Counties, broadband capacity and initiatives to increase investment in distressed communities such as Opportunity Zones.

"Washington has enjoyed an unprecedented economic boom, yet there are signs of a potential downturn and many communities across the state are struggling – some counties have unemployment rates above or near 10%. There are also pockets of serious poverty in our urban counties. We need a strong economic development ecosystem to increase prosperity across all of Washington," said WEDA Board Chair Mike Bomar.

Gary Ballew, WEDA Board Chair-Elect and Legislative Committee Chair added, “WEDA’s 2020 Legislative Agenda focuses on the tools needed to empower communities across Washington to be world-class economic engines and assist businesses large and small in becoming globally competitive. WEDA believes the time is now to plan ahead with proactive measures to sustain economic vitality.”

We are actively advocating for WEDA’s priorities like never before – WEDA Board Chair Mike Bomar and WEDA Executive Director Suzanne Dale Estey presented the 2020 Legislative Agenda at the House Innovation, Technology & Economic Development Committee on September 13. WEDA’s lobbyist, Jennifer Ziegler, Suzanne and WEDA Board Members are doing a number of outreach and legislative meetings this fall. *Now is the time* to be meeting with your legislators and taking them on site visits of economic development projects and needs in your communities – *we all need to continue to foster economic development champions in Olympia!*

If you are a WEDA member, please join our first annual WEDA Legislative Roundtable on October 10. We now have both the House and Senate Economic Development Committee Chairs confirmed to join us, and the EASC Public Officials Reception that will follow will be a great chance to engage with a large number of elected officials.

We are looking forward to WEDA investors participating in our regular Legislative Update conference calls and joining us for WEDA Lobbying Days in Olympia. *Please join us!*

