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35 Cities. A Million People. One Voice.

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**Executive Director**  
Deanna Dawson

**Sound Cities Association**  
6300 Southcenter Boulevard  
Suite 206  
Tukwila, WA 98188  
(206) 433-7168  
SCA@SoundCities.org  
www.SoundCities.org

June 19, 2013

The Honorable Rep. Judy Clibborn  
House Transportation Committee Chair

The Honorable Sen. Curtis King  
Senate Transportation Committee Co-Chair

The Honorable Rep. Frank Chopp  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Honorable Sen. Rodney Tom  
Senate Majority Coalition Leader

Dear Legislative Leaders,

On behalf of the Sound Cities Association, I write to you today to urge you to take action to pass a transportation package this year.

As you know, the Sound Cities Association (formerly the Suburban Cities Association) was founded in the 1970s to help cities in King County act locally and partner regionally to create vital, livable communities through advocacy, education, leadership, mutual support, and networking. Collectively, our 35 member cities represent nearly one million constituents in King County.

A healthy transportation system is a critical foundation of our state and local economies and our quality of life, as well as our global position as the nation’s most trade-dependent state. Our transportation system is suffering from disrepair, with a backlog of maintenance and preservation needs. Data shows that without new investments, more than half the pavement on our state roads and highways will be in poor condition by 2023. Failing roads and bridges, congested highway corridors, and bottlenecked interchanges undermine the mobility of vehicles, transit, and freight-carriers to transport people and goods, and this in turn poses a real threat to our economy. Investing in maintaining and upgrading our transportation system is a positive step the Legislature can take to catalyze construction jobs, enhance freight mobility for our Ports, and create a pathway for retaining and growing new jobs for key industry sectors. Simply put, our transportation system is in crisis, and failure to act this year puts our local, regional, and state economy in jeopardy.

For these reasons, our Board voted unanimously today to adopt a position of support for passage of a transportation package this year, in order to address our state’s critical transportation infrastructure needs.

Our Board also unanimously adopted a position of support for a “local options” component to the package. Specifically, for local jurisdictions that have formed a Transportation Benefit District, we would urge you to expand from \$20 to \$40 the vehicle license fee that can be enacted through public vote or councilmanic action. In addition, we would strongly urge you to give local jurisdictions the option of enacting an up to 1.5% Motor Vehicle Excise Tax, and that in King County, 60% of revenues be allocated to transit, with 40% allocated to cities and the county (distributed based on population) for roads, bridges, and other critical transportation infrastructure needs.

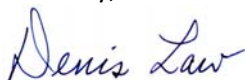
This local options package was born of much collaboration and compromise between our 35 member cities, the City of Seattle, and King County. We put aside political differences and worked together to come up with a package that could serve the needs of citizens and jurisdictions throughout our county. It is a balanced package that ensures that our transportation needs are addressed holistically, with a healthy mix of funding for transit, rural roads, and city streets. We recognize that we cannot view our infrastructure needs in isolation, and that we need to partner together to make strategic investments now as a region in order to keep our economy growing.

The package has been supported by local leaders in the business, labor, and environmental communities. If we are not given the tools we need at the local level, we may face cuts of up to 17% to transit service in King County. This would have a devastating effect on many of our local residents, and add to our already congested local streets and highways. In King County, 90% of our residents live in cities. City streets get us from home to work, school, health care, and recreation. This local option would allow our cities to repave our heaviest volume streets, rehab or replace bridges that might otherwise have to be closed, and improve the safety of our roads. An investment in our transportation infrastructure today would allow us to stem the decline of our roadway assets, and enable us to avoid millions in high replacement costs in the future.

Our Board represents cities large and small, urban and rural, and our elected officials run the gamut politically from left to right. While we come from different backgrounds and perspectives, we all came together and voted unanimously to support passage of a transportation package this year because we know just how critical transportation funding is to our local, regional, and state economy. We urge the legislature to come together in the spirit of bipartisanship and compromise, and to pass a transportation package this year.

Thank you for your efforts, and your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director Deanna Dawson at (206) 433-7170, or via email at [Deanna@SoundCities.org](mailto:Deanna@SoundCities.org).

Sincerely,



Denis Law  
President, Sound Cities Association  
Mayor, City of Renton

Cc: King County Legislative Delegation  
Governor Jay Inslee  
Sound Cities Association Board of Directors  
Sound Cities Association Public Issues Committee  
King County Executive Dow Constantine  
Metropolitan King County Council  
Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn  
Bellevue Mayor Conrad Lee