

Dear Councilmembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the merits of proposed Initiative 1033 on behalf of the "No on I-1033" campaign. I am convinced that the passage of Initiative 1033 would seriously impair the ability of the City of Burien, as well as Highline School District, King County, the State of Washington and other governments throughout our state, to meet citizens' basic needs and to keep us economically competitive with other states.

Initiative 1033 would establish 2009 as the baseline for revenue collections by the state and by local governments, including Burien, and would not allow revenue to exceed the rate of inflation plus population growth without voter approval. This inflexible formula would prevent governments from providing services above the bare minimum to which they have been stripped amidst their worst budget years in decades, and in some cases, such as Burien and King County, in their histories.

Staff estimates that the passage of Initiative 1033's revenue cap would reduce the City of Burien's allowable revenue collections by \$170,000 in 2011, \$231,000 in 2012, \$497,000 in 2013, \$728,000 in 2014, and \$926,000 in 2015. \$926,000 is the equivalent of more than one fifth of the city's expenditures on public works and more than a third of our expenditures on parks and recreation. The cap would seriously impair the city's ability to undertake projects such as incentivizing economic activity in the Northeast Redevelopment Area and continued investments in downtown, and it would cripple ongoing investments in public safety, parks, and transportation.

Colorado approved a similar initiative in 1992 known as the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights, or TABOR. In the years following TABOR's passage, Colorado's per capita investments in education fell to 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation, and investments in transportation fell to 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation. The impacts of TABOR were so severe in Colorado that the state's Republican governor proposed a new voters' initiative in 2005 to suspend TABOR, which passed.

State and local governments need flexibility to help get our state's economy moving again. Programs ranging from the University of Washington to Washington Basic Health and Apple Health for Kids to grants and loans for local governments will be at risk of further cuts should it pass. In addition, Initiative 1033 would have a "ratcheting down" effect by ensuring that future recessions further reduce the allowed level of revenue collection, while not raising the allowed level during better economic times.

Initiative 1033 is opposed by an astoundingly broad array of advocacy groups across our state, including such disparate advocates as Washington Conservation Voters, the Washington Realtors, the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Suburban Cities Association, and the Municipal League. Likewise, many local governments in our state have adopted or are considering resolutions opposing Initiative 1033, including Redmond, Renton, Bothell, and Everett. I urge the Burien City Council to join these organizations and governments in adopting Draft Resolution No. 305 urging the voters of Burien and of Washington to reject Initiative 1033.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joe Fitzgibbon

CFTR: 10/5/09

