



Local officials praise governor's defense of public works funds

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3

WENATCHEE — Chelan County elected officials and other leaders this week hailed a Gov. Jay Inslee veto that preserves a vital state fund to support water and sewer projects in rural communities.

The governor Monday vetoed legislation that has drained more than \$273 million from the state's Public Works Trust Fund.

For 30 years, the fund had been a source of low-cost financing for rural water and sewer projects until the state Legislature began tapping it several years ago to balance the state budget and fund education.

"Critical water and wastewater projects that provide far-reaching human health and environmental protection can have extraordinary negative financial impacts on the residents of rural communities," Steve Wright, general manager of the Chelan County PUD, said in a joint news release Wednesday from Chelan County and the county's port district and PUD.

"The governor is to be commended for taking action that supports rural communities," Wright said.

The City of Wenatchee is one of many local agencies that has benefited from the fund. It received a low-interest, \$1.87 million loan for critical improvements to its sewer plant. The loan will be repaid by 2031, the news release said.

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