



CHELAN COUNTY

April 21, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: TRACY YOUNT
CHELAN PUD
(509) 661-4353

GOVERNOR INSLEE PROTECTS PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT FINANCING
ELECTED LEADERS ACROSS CHELAN COUNTY SUPPORT GOVERNOR'S VETO

WENATCHEE, WA – On Monday, Gov. Jay Inslee vetoed legislation that would have redirected hundreds of millions of dollars from the Public Works Trust Fund and would have discontinued any new loans under program. This is a significant action by the Governor and one supported by the Port of Chelan County, Chelan County, the Chelan County Public Utility District, and our local cities and towns.

“The Public Works Trust Fund has been a critical source of funding for local governments and taxing districts for projects that they do not have the funds to accomplish,” said Keith Goehner, Chelan County Commissioner, District 2. “We are grateful for the Governor's veto of legislation that would have seriously impacted our communities' ability to make improvements to vital services.”

By vetoing this legislation, small, rural communities can continue to seek sources of low-cost financing to support critical infrastructure projects.

“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,” said Steve Wright the General Manager of Chelan County Public Utility District. “The Governor is to be commended for taking action that supports rural communities while encouraging construction projects that will benefit people across the state.”

The governor vetoed a section of a fiscal bill that would have diverted all revenue from the account, more than \$273 million, effectively killing the Public Works Trust Fund program. For 30 years the program was a main source of low-cost financing for water and wastewater projects until the Legislature began sweeping the program account several years ago to balance the state budget and fund education.

“There is a clear need for future public infrastructure improvement throughout the state,” Inslee said in a prepared statement. “For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 935.”

Low-interest loans from the state Public Works Trust Fund made affordable financing available for many community projects in Chelan County. As loans are repaid with interest, the funds are available for new projects.

An example is loans to the City of Wenatchee at 0.5-percent interest that provided critical wastewater improvements while keeping rates affordable for utility customers. A \$1.87 million loan helped finance upgrades to the city wastewater treatment plant and \$765,000 loan was used for the Squilchuck lift station. Both loans will be repaid by 2031.

Chelan County, Port of Chelan County and Chelan County PUD host regular Tri-Commission meetings to share information and coordinate on issues of importance to local communities, cities and the county as a whole.