

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5289

May 15, 2001

To the Honorable President and Members,  
The Senate of the State of Washington  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Engrossed Senate Bill No. 5289 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to public facilities in rural counties;"

Although the original intent of Engrossed Senate Bill No. 5289 was meritorious, in its final form the bill would have undermined the intent of the rural sales tax credit program.

The prime sponsor requested this veto.

I support the original intent of this bill, which was to clarify and expand the use of the rural sales tax credit funding program. The bill sought to provide rural counties with a source of funds for the development of public facilities that are important for creating economic opportunity. However, this bill was amended to prevent any electric utility, including many of our public utility districts from using the money.

Public utility districts are key partners in economic development efforts. They provide not only electrical service, but also sewer, water, and telecommunications services. At a time when funding is limited, we must pool our resources whenever possible to accomplish important economic goals. Removing an important partner from eligibility for these funds unnecessarily ties the hands of the counties in promoting the vitality of their economies.

Additionally, the bill would have undermined the ability to develop electrical generation and distribution facilities that may be important during a time of energy shortage.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Engrossed Senate Bill No. 5289 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Locke  
Governor