

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6493

March 31, 2004

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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 1, Senate Bill No. 6493 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to costs of elections;"

This bill addresses the allocation of election costs for statewide officers and ballot measures. It also provides that non-charter code cities, when making changes in their form of governance, place that decision before voters at the next general election, rather than calling a special election within 180 days.

This bill was adopted unanimously by the Legislature. However, following its delivery to me, King County and the associations that represent county officials and county governments recognized its potential impacts and requested that section 1 be vetoed.

Section 1 would have affected the sharing of election costs in even-numbered years. It would have prohibited counties from prorating any portion of the costs of statewide races or ballot measures to cities, towns, or special purpose districts. Currently, counties can distribute those costs among all jurisdictions that participate in an election.

This section would have had particularly severe effects in King County, which could have faced added costs of \$600,000 to \$700,000 in the 2004 election alone. The biggest beneficiary of the county's increased expense would have been the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID). This is unfair because RTID received close to \$2 million in the 2003-05 operating budget specifically for election-related costs. The cities and towns in King County also would have experienced savings, but with a cumulative total of \$270,000, these would have been relatively small for each of them.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 1 of Senate Bill No. 6493.

With the exception of section 1, Senate Bill No. 6493 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor