



Media Release
For Immediate Release
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Tri-City Regional Chamber Board of Directors votes to oppose Referendum 52

TRI-CITIES, WA - Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors have voted to oppose Referendum 52. The referendum is a measure to authorize bonds to finance construction and repair projects increasing energy efficiency in public schools and higher education buildings, and continue the sales tax on bottled water. Board members approved the vote September 15 during the regularly scheduled monthly Board of Directors meeting.

"This isn't the proper time to put our state into even more debt," said Tri-City Regional Chamber Vice President Colin Hastings. "Governor Gregoire recently had to make a 6% across the board cut in spending earlier this month, and the forecast deficit for next year's budget is already nearing \$5 Billion," continued Hastings.

Debt expenses consume 84% more Washington State taxpayer dollars now than 12 years ago, reaching \$1.8 billion in the 2010 budget. Washington State Economist Arun Raha predicts this measure will only provide 5700 short term jobs across the state.

The measure would extend the tax collected on bottled water dedicated to the general fund to service the debt. The concern is the growing movement to ban sale of bottled water. Many institutions are prohibiting the sale and/or purchase of bottled water, including an executive order blocking by the City of Seattle from ever purchasing bottled water.

"It just seems like a flimsy source of revenue funding. Tobacco tax revenues have steadily declined over the last 10 years, and I do suspect the same will hold true with bottled water tax revenues if this law were enacted," concluded Hastings.

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