



Media Release
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Tri-City Regional Chamber Reaction to Labor & Industry's Announcement on the Worker's Compensation Increase Beginning January 2011

TRI-CITIES, WA — The Department of Labor & Industries announced that Worker's Compensation Premiums will increase an average of 12% at the beginning of next year. The Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce is concerned how this additional increased cost will affect all businesses across the state. Washington State's economy is suffering, and its common knowledge that business growth is what will create jobs and pull the state out of this economic slump.

"Again, this couldn't have come at a worse time for businesses in our region," said Tri-City Regional Chamber Vice President Colin Hastings, "it's a triple whammy next year, from workers' comp, a 40 percent increase in unemployment taxes, and a hike in the state minimum wage that will give Washington the highest state rate in the country. All of it during the most sluggish economic situation since the Great Depression."

The Department of Labor & Industries determines what the premiums employers in Washington State will pay. L&I postponed this rate announcement until after the election. The department cited technical difficulties, and said it didn't want to confuse business owners by making a rate announcement it might have to change later. Some observers questioned the tactic at the time as L&I playing politics because of I-1082 on the ballot, which would have reformed how worker's compensation insurance is run in this state.

All companies, with exception of a few large self-insured businesses, have no other option but to buy Worker's Compensation Insurance through Labor & Industries. Washington State leads the nation on the number of job loss time at nearly 2.5 times of the national average.

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