

# BATF

King County, General Government

## Budget Advisory Task Force

October 4, 2005

King County Executive Ron Sims  
King County Councilmember Larry Gossett

Dear Executive Sims and Councilmember Gossett:

On behalf of the King County Budget Advisory Task Force members noted below, we wish to express our support for and endorsement of this proposed Financial Policy Ordinance, which will ensure sustainable economic prosperity by codifying sound financial policies and practices.

The BATForce shares the Executive's concern for safeguarding the important and unique financial gains of the past several years, so that the county can continue to fulfill its mission of improving the region's quality of life. It is with this concern that we write in support of the proposed law.

As we exhorted in the BATForce report of July 2003: "Managing the budget this year and in the future will require finding efficiencies at all levels of County Government... [This] means managing for the long-term rather than the immediate crisis."

We recommended specifically that King County: contain employee health care and benefit cost growth, promote annexation and incorporation of urban unincorporated areas, streamline government operations, and invest in technology.

We give you credit for the progress made toward these goals since publication of our BATForce report. Indeed, the road to today's financial success has not been easy to travel. As we recommended, King County acted:

- King County is on its way to achieving solid results in reducing health care costs, with an innovative "healthy incentives" system of managing health care benefits.
- On the service side, our recommendation to promote annexation and incorporation of unincorporated areas is moving forward aggressively under your guidance, in areas such as Klahanie, East Renton and Fairwood.
- King County has invested in technology that supports safety and justice, jail health and personal security and privacy.

Taken together, these efficiencies and practices have made possible King County's stable "revenue vs. expenditures" projection for upcoming budget years. Such accomplishments have also contributed directly to King County's excellent bond ratings. These are among the highest for any government today and will help to minimize future interest costs.

While these recent successes are laudable, the BATForce must remind King County not to rest. Now is the time to consolidate and preserve the gains achieved, as an effective safeguard against the unseen but inevitable fiscal challenges of the future.

Toward that end, we believe that Financial Policy Ordinance is not simply consistent with the BATForce recommendations, but indeed crucial to forwarding the best future interest of the people of King County.

Signed,

Robert C. Wallace  
BATF Co-Chair

John D. Warner  
BATF Co-Chair

cc: King County Councilmembers  
Members, King County Budget Advisory Task Force:  
The Honorable Terry Carroll  
Clem Edwards  
Rollin Fatland  
The Honorable Darcy Goodman  
Jim Hattori  
Peggy Phillips  
Connie Proctor  
Aggie Sweeney