



Chelan County

400 DOUGLAS ST., SUITE 201
WENATCHEE, WASH. 98801

www.co.chelan.wa.us

Contact: Jill FitzSimmons
Public Information Officer

jillm.fitzsimmons@co.chelan.wa.us
509-667-6545

BOCC STATEMENT (Aug. 27, 2025)

Chelan County commissioners deeply disappointed by port's plan to divert over \$100 million from critical county services

We are deeply disappointed by the Chelan-Douglas Regional Port Authority's recent actions.

By submitting its project analysis to form a Tax Increment Area (TIA) to the Washington State Treasurer's Office, the regional port has not acted in good faith, making it clear that community partnerships and collaborations are not its priority. In fact, the regional port has a history of such selfish behavior, targeting already prospering areas to divert tax dollars from the community, first in Douglas County and now in Chelan County.

Disingenuous statements from the regional port's CEO Jim Kuntz, that he wished to work with Chelan County, have proven to be nothing more than a smokescreen and a delay tactic to ensure that there would be no possibility of an equal partnership application between the regional port and the county.

We also question how the regional port could have been so far off in its original estimate of the tax dollars that will be diverted from Chelan County. Most recent numbers from the regional port's submitted project analysis point to more than \$103.6 million – not \$50.3 million as we were originally told – being diverted from Chelan County government over the next 25 years.

While the regional port may have a legislative authority to form a TIA, however misguided the intent is, the Board of Chelan County Commissioners has the legislative authority to put a moratorium in place to ensure due diligence is done, especially when we see the long-term damaging impacts to county services, including transportation, law enforcement and veterans services, to name a few.

We encourage the public to attend our hearing at 11 a.m. on Sept. 23 in our chambers to let us know what you think of this proposed TIA and the county's moratorium. We also encourage the public to ask:

- What does the Chelan-Douglas Regional Port Authority do for you?
- Do you want to reduce or even give up public services in the future?
- Are you willing to pay more taxes to make up the shortfall the county will face with the loss of revenue created by the TIA so you don't have to give up those services?
- Are you willing to give up any future tax rate reductions that come with new businesses locating here just so the regional port can spend those dollars on its own priority projects at the detriment to essential public services?

A county and its state-mandated services are not able to continue without the tax dollars generated by new construction. Tax payments by residents should not be diverted to one entity that does not consider the best interests of the community or the mandated service obligations to a community. Tax dollars should not be diverted to one entity whose only intent is to speculatively invest in an area that is already prospering. It's short-sighted, selfish and downright wrong.

Commissioner Kevin Overbay, District 1 Commissioner Shon Smith, District 2 Commissioner Brad Hawkins, District 3