



Wenatchee Valley Firefighters Union – IAFF Local 453

Serving the Residents of the Wenatchee Valley

Lost Revenue for a Generation: Malaga TIF Would Divert \$70.5 Million from Fire Protection

The Port of Chelan Douglas County (the Port) is using the proposed Malaga TIF in a way that falls outside the intent of Washington's tax-increment law. Much of the area — including the Microsoft data centers — is already developed and privately funded, with infrastructure paid for by the companies building there, not by the Port.

The TIF law was designed to encourage development that would not occur 'but for' the creation of a tax increment area. In this case, many of the projects are already under construction or complete. The Port is simply capturing revenue from successful private investment — not enabling new growth.

This is not the first time the Port has used a TIF in an already developed area. The Port has a history of creating similar financing districts in Douglas County where development was already established. This pattern shows that the Port is using TIFs not as a tool to spur new growth, but as a way to capture tax revenue from existing, successful areas — a practice that runs counter to the Legislature's intent when authorizing TIFs in Washington State.

The Wenatchee Valley Fire Department (WVFD) currently operates two-person engine companies, which is below the national standard of four firefighters per engine. This staffing level limits our ability to perform rescue operations upon arrival and delays critical life-safety actions until additional units arrive.

The \$70.5 million in lost funding projected under this TIF is instrumental to achieving a life-safety staffing model — one that ensures the first-arriving engine company has enough firefighters to immediately begin a rescue or suppression operation.

If this TIF moves forward, the cost of maintaining safe staffing will be pushed onto taxpayers outside the TIF district, forcing residents in the rest of Chelan and Douglas Counties to pay

higher taxes to offset the Port's revenue diversion.

The Port is taking money away from the very fire department that protects the same residents, workers, and visitors the Port claims to represent. Our crews respond not just in Malaga, but throughout the entire Wenatchee Valley — protecting the people who live, work, and invest in this region. Diverting funding from WVFD doesn't just hurt Malaga; it weakens public safety across the whole valley.

IAFF Local 453 and its members stand firmly against the proposed Malaga TIF. We oppose this measure not for political reasons, but for the safety of the residents we serve. Our mission is to protect lives and property, and any policy that weakens our ability to do that puts the entire Wenatchee Valley at risk.