

April 11, 2024

Snohomish County Salary Commission Members
C/O Commission Liaison Lindsey Jones

Dear Commission members:

As the current Snohomish County Council Chair, I want to thank you for volunteering your time and service to the 2024 Salary Commission. I appreciate your thoughtful investment in setting the salaries of our County's elected officials.

I would like to extend an apology to each of you for not presenting at the March 28th Commission Meeting. Our Council is comprised of five independently elected officials who each serve a unique and diverse sub-section of our County's population. Out of respect for the Commission's time limit on presentations, we have historically had our Chief of Staff present to the Salary Commission as our collective representative, rather than hold time and space for each independently elected Councilmember to speak to their role. In hindsight, I realize that practice may not provide the Commission with the ideal representation of a Councilmember's role and the breadth and depth of their responsibility; we intend to revise our approach in future years.

I understand that the Commission is contemplating rightsizing the County Executive and Sheriff relative to the highest paid staff person; while I appreciate and understand that logic, I'd offer some points for the Commission's ongoing consideration:

- Each Councilmember serves as the Elected Representative for their respective area and although as a collective, they serve as the Legislative body, they do act independently, like the Auditor, the Assessor, the Treasurer, etc.
- As is true for the County Executive and the Sheriff, there are staff who serve the Council that are more highly compensated. As an example, our Chief of Staff earns \$174,571, a Senior Legislative Analyst earns \$147,071, and a Councilmember earns \$137,329.
- Should the Commission increase the County Executive's compensation to that of the Deputy Executive plus .01%, the gap between the County Executive and a Councilmember's compensation grows to a disproportionate level, comparative to the gap between the King County Executive and King County Councilmembers. As I understand the Commission's current path forward, in 2025, the County Executive would be compensated \$248,038. With a 5% increase in 2025 from their current salary, the Councilmembers would make \$147,801. I do not believe the workload and duties of the Executive versus the Councilmembers justifies this large of a differential.

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- I'd also offer that the work of the Snohomish County Council, which is largely similar in scope to that of King and Pierce Counties, is distributed between only five (5) Councilmembers, whereas King County has nine (9) and Pierce County seven (7).

Given the above factors, I respectfully ask that the Commission reconsider applying the same rationale used for the County Executive and the Sheriff to the Councilmembers by aligning our salaries with reference to our Chief of Staff. Or, as a second option, consider aligning the Councilmember's salaries to those of the other County independently elected individuals, such as the Treasurer, Assessor, Auditor, and Clerk – all of whom currently are compensated more than a Councilmember.

Thank you again for your time and the work you are doing for our county.

Sincerely,



Jared Mead

Council Chair, District 4

Snohomish County Council

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