

# 2019 City of Tacoma Federal Agenda

## General Government

### Affordable Housing and Homelessness:

- The City opposes elimination of HOME and CDBG that serve the most vulnerable populations. Tacoma has invested these programs wisely in our community and will continue to draw on their support to help individuals, families and neighborhoods to gain stability. As examples, Tacoma adopted the *Affordable Housing Action Strategy (AHAS)* to safeguard and increase the number of affordable, available, and accessible housing units throughout the city over the next 10 years. The City adopted a Temporary Emergency Aid and Shelter Plan in 2017 that was originally funded only through 2018 but must be extended through 2019.

### Economic Development and Infrastructure:

- Tacoma citizens have approved initiatives to invest in local streets and transit, but the magnitude of some projects such as replacement of the 90-year old Puyallup River Bridge or the Puget Sound Gateway Project cannot be achieved through local and State funds alone. The City calls on Congress and the Administration to find adequate, reliable, and sustainable long-term funding for a vibrant web of connected transportation options that reflect local needs and priorities.
- Access to high-speed broadband service in every community is essential to our ability to provide quality education, create more jobs, and increase small business growth. Local communities must have the option to own and operate public broadband networks. Local governments are central players in ensuring broadband connection to homes and businesses is achieved. The City calls on the Federal Communications Commission and Congress to preserve local government authority to manage their rights-of-way to ensure the siting of cell towers and small cells is safe and appropriate.

## Environment:

- At the Center for Urban Waters in Tacoma, world class laboratories are creating, evaluating, and applying the best possible scientific and engineering clean water technologies to protect and restore Puget Sound and to lead development of solutions for all urban coastal communities. The City applauds its representatives in Congress for their leadership in introducing legislation that would protect the water quality of Puget Sound and supports legislation that would acknowledge and build upon innovative storm water work such as that being done at the Center for Urban Waters.
- In response to President Trump's 2017 withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, Tacoma became among 407 cities representing 70 million Americans that continue to honor and uphold the commitments to the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement. These cities will continue to lead by increasing investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, buying and creating more demand for electric cars and trucks, increasing efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, creating a clean energy economy, and standing for environmental justice and building and strengthening relationships around the world to protect the planet from devastating climate risks.

## Human Dignity and Safety:

- It is a priority of the City to make Tacoma a "Welcoming City" and to cultivate an environment supportive of immigrants and refugees. The City calls on the federal government to enact comprehensive immigration reform including creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, refugees and permanently addressing the legal status of undocumented students including DREAMERS and DACA.
- The Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma is a privately-owned detention facility that operates under contract with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration & Customs Enforcement to house non-U.S. citizens who are apprehended and determined to need custodial supervision. The City urges its Congressional delegates to continue to pursue legislation that would end the use of privately-operated prisons and increase the use of available alternatives to immigration detention. The City applauds the leadership in Washington's congressional delegation who introduced the *Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act* that would restore dignity and justice to the broken detention system.

- The City calls on Congress to pass legislation to address mental health to support local communities to improve mental health and especially to lend critical support to families and youth. Tacoma youth report lower rates of mental wellness than statewide counterparts. Living in poverty adds to the risk of mental health disorders; one in four children in Tacoma are living in poverty. Mental illness is the most commonly reported disability affecting the city's homeless population.
- The City urges Congress to provide funding to respond to the national opioid epidemic and expand access to treatment. Deaths tied to opioid overdoses in Pierce County occurred at a rate of 10.2 deaths per 100,000 people; a rate higher than the statewide average of 9.8. In 2018, Tacoma was one of six cities from across the country chosen to participate in the National League of Cities Mayors' Institute on Opioids and the only city west of the Mississippi to receive an invitation.

#### Opportunities for Youth:

- Tacoma cherishes its youth; providing services to them is a priority. The Mayor's Youth Engagement Task Force will help the City establish its very first Youth Commission and improve upon existing youth-focused programs. The City of Tacoma has maintained a strong partnership for some years with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities in calling on Congress to reinstate federal funding to provide resources to communities to help support more robust partnerships that create work-based learning opportunities and ensure local communities have sufficient resources to support families, and children and youth from ages zero to 18 years.

#### **Tacoma Public Utilities**

##### TPU-Wide:

- TPU supports legislation that promotes the availability of tax-exempt municipal bonds. TPU will support proposals that revoke recent changes relating to the advanced refunding of bonds. Tax exempt municipal bonds keep costs low for customers.

### Tacoma Power:

- Tacoma Power continues to support federal appropriations for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Tacoma Power continues to support federal appropriations for the Department of Energy's Hydropower Incentive Program. The program provides payments to hydropower utilities, including Tacoma Power, for hydroelectric production that was added to an existing dam or conduit.
- Tacoma Power supports efficiencies and streamlining of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydropower licensing and relicensing policies, similar to bipartisan proposals put forward by Sen. Maria Cantwell and Sen. Lisa Murkowski in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### Tacoma Water:

- Tacoma Water continues to support federal authorization, appropriations, and actions necessary to complete the Howard Hanson Dam – Additional Water Storage Project. Any federal action must respect federal/non-federal cost share agreements already in place.
- Tacoma Water is supportive of appropriations to fully fund the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA).
- Tacoma Water supports adequate appropriations for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

### Tacoma Rail:

- Tacoma Rail supports permanent extension of the Railroad Track Maintenance Credit – or “45G” tax credit. Tacoma Rail receives about \$250,000 in annual revenues from the 45G tax credit. Those funds have been used for a number of safety upgrades as well as to comply with unfunded federal requirements mandated by the 2008 Rail Safety Act.
- Tacoma Rail seeks to work with Congress to establish a short line specific freight railroad state-of-good-repair program as part of the federal freight/rail title and other federal programs. Specifically, establishment of a competitive capital grant program for short line regional railroad infrastructure improvement projects.