

COALITION OF  
WASHINGTON  
BUSINESS  
ORGANIZATIONS  
(COWBO)  
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#### MEMBERS

ASSOCIATION OF  
WASHINGTON BUSINESS

ASSOCIATED GENERAL  
CONTRACTORS OF WA

INDEPENDENT BUSINESS  
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON  
ASSOCIATION OF  
REALTORS

WASHINGTON BANKERS  
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON FARM  
BUREAU

WASHINGTON FOOD  
INDUSTRY

WASHINGTON FOREST  
PROTECTION  
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON  
RESTAURANT  
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON RETAIL  
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON  
ROUNDTABLE

WESTERN STATES  
PETROLEUM ASSOCIATION

NFIB

## Coalition of Washington Business Organizations (COWBO)

January 16, 2009

The Honorable Christine Gregoire  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

Our state is facing the biggest fiscal challenge in recent memory: a nearly \$6 billion budget deficit that is virtually certain to grow due to continued job losses and sliding real estate values. Business and consumer confidence is at an all-time low. The hope that Washington could weather this storm better than many other states is all but gone.

The state budget is our highest priority. As representatives of thousands of employers across nearly every industry and region statewide, we are very concerned about how this deficit will be addressed and what the long-term impact will be on state competitiveness and the ability of employers to operate and grow here.

First and foremost, we urge lawmakers to approve a sustainable budget that addresses the deficit through a series of spending cuts and prioritized investments. Now is not the time for tax increases. Raising taxes will overburden struggling families and businesses and devastate what modest consumer and business confidence remains.

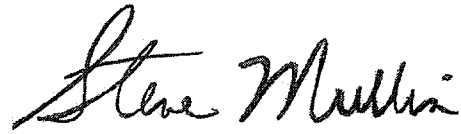
Instead, your top priority this session must be to enact policies that will encourage job creation and recovery. This includes making sure Washington is cost competitive in areas such as workers' compensation, unemployment insurance and regulatory policy. It means investing in services – like infrastructure, education and workforce development – that have the greatest potential to foster long-term economic growth and prosperity. And it means avoiding any action that raises the cost of doing business, including direct tax or fee increases, elimination of incentives or increased regulation. Ultimately, any decision that makes it more expensive for companies to retain or add employees will only delay or jeopardize economic recovery.

With strong fiscal discipline and a commitment to improve competitiveness, Washington can emerge from this crisis stronger and better positioned for a prosperous future. The members of our coalition are committed to working with you to encourage such policies during the legislative session. We want to play a productive and collaborative role in shaping the future of Washington. Please let us know how we can contribute in the days and months ahead.

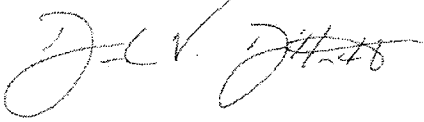
Sincerely,



Anthony Anton  
WA Restaurant Association



Steve Mullin  
WA Roundtable



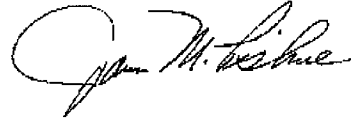
David D'Hondt  
Associated General Contractors of WA



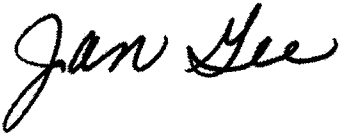
Troy Nichols  
National Federation Independent Business



Don Brunell  
Association of Washington Business



James Pishue  
WA Bankers Association



Jan Gee  
WA Food Industry



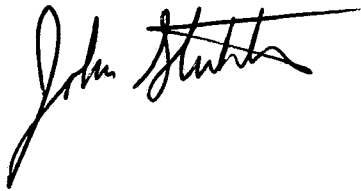
Gary Smith  
Independent Business Association



Frank Holmes  
Western States Petroleum



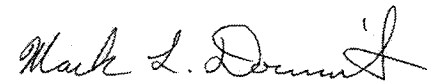
Jan Teague  
Washington Retail Association



John Stuhlmiller  
WA State Farm Bureau



Steve Francks  
Washington Association of Realtors



Mark Doumit  
WA Forest Protection Association