The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Youth  
and Community  
Athletic Facilities Grant Program  
Funding for the 2015-17 Capital Budget

Dear Governor Inslee,

We are joining together to convey our strong support for a recommendation that you include $12 million in your 2015-17 Capital Budget for the Youth and Community Athletic Facilities Grant Program.
The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504  

RE: Youth & Community Athletic Facilities Grant Program Funding for 2015-17 Capital Budget  

Dear Governor Inslee,  

We are joining together to convey our strong support for a recommendation that you include $12 million in your 2015-17 Capital Budget for the Youth and Community Athletic Facilities (YAF) competitive grant program. It is our understanding that funding for YAF also received a strong endorsement from the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Outdoor Recreation, which made this one of their key near-term recommendations.  

We think this $12 million allocation would be an outstanding way to support healthy citizens and communities, contribute to economic development, give our youth access to the outdoors, and help local parks and recreation agencies develop and maintain all-weather athletic fields and facilities in a state that has its share of unpredictable weather.
Clearly, there is a tremendous need for this competitive grant program. YAF has not received competitive grant funding since 2006, meaning local parks and recreation agencies get very little support for all-weather fields that can cost several million dollars to build and maintain. We do have the very successful Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), but its “local parks” category is badly over-subscribed, is limited in how much development funding it can grant, and is designed to cover a broad mix of projects beyond just athletic fields.

Governor, at the same time we have seen a sharp downturn in state funding for community athletic fields, we are challenged by a sharp uptick in demand for these fields. That is due to increasing populations, more interest than ever in traditional sports, the understanding that we need to make fields available to diverse communities at all income levels, and the growing popularity of non-traditional sports such as ultimate Frisbee and lacrosse. The need for this competitive grant was demonstrated when the Recreation and Conservation Office asked for letters of interest and received hundreds of letters totaling tens of millions of dollars in projects.

When we invest in community athletic fields, we invest in several things that serve the state’s interest. These fields provide an outlet to outdoor recreation for all youth, especially those from diverse and lower-income communities. Community athletic fields help people of all ages stay active and healthy, combating obesity, preventing disease, and helping us conserve our health care dollars. All-weather fields also make good business sense for the state, better enabling our local communities to draw major tournaments and visitors who spend money in our stores, eat at our restaurants, stay at our hotels, and get a sampling of the unparalleled beauty of this great state.

Governor, we see the $12 million proposal for the Youth and Community Athletic Facilities program as a very good investment, healthy communities, economic development, and outdoor recreation decision for the State of Washington. Please include it in your 2015-17 Capital Budget.

Sincerely,

Bill McDonald
City Manager
City of Puyallup

Jack C. Wilson
Executive Director/CEO
Metro Parks Tacoma

Victor Colman, JD
Director
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition

Scott Plack
Director of State Government Relations
Group Health Cooperative
James L. King  
Coordinator  
Citizens for Parks and Recreation

Travis Stombaugh  
Coordinator  
King Co. Parks and Recreation Directors

Ray Stephanson  
Mayor  
City of Everett

Mary Dodsworth  
Coordinator  
Pierce Co. Parks and Recreation Directors

Joseph Strobele  
Treasurer  
Lake Washington Youth Soccer Assc

Matthew Watrous  
Executive Director  
Boys & Girls Clubs Washington State Assc

Candice Bock  
Board President  
Olympia United Soccer Club

Carrie Hite  
President  
Washington Recreation and Parks Assc

Fred Butler  
Mayor  
City of Issaquah

Mark Mantei  
Chief Operating Officer  
The Everett Clinic
Margaret E. Hood, MD  
President  
WA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Jane A. Moore, MD  
Secretary  
WA Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity

Preston M. Simmons, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Providence Health & Services, NW WA Region

Anthony DeSimone  
Director  
Emerald City Supporters Football Club

Mike McCarty  
CEO  
Association of Washington Cities

Shari Winstead  
Mayor  
City of Shoreline

Ashley Probart  
President  
Blackhills Community Soccer Complex

Cc:  
David Schumacher, Budget Director  
Nona Snell, Capital Budget Coordinator  
Matt Steuerwalt, OFM Policy Director  
JT Austin, OFM Policy Advisor  
Jim Cahill, OFM  
Miguel Perez-Gibson, Legislative Director