



November 22, 2016

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of the State of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

RE: *Requesting that you adopt the recommendation to include \$12 million in your 2017-19 Capital Budget for the Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) competitive grant program*

Dear Governor Inslee:

We are writing to respectfully urge that you support a recommendation coming from your Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to allocate \$12 million toward the Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) competitive grant program in the 2017-19 Capital Budget your transmit to the Legislature.

An investment of \$12 million in the YAF is an investment in healthy communities. It is an investment in our youth, and in giving them access to playfields that give them their first 'gateway' access to the outdoors. It is an investment in economic development. And it is a critical tool for our local parks and recreation agencies, helping them to develop, maintain, and renovate outdoor athletic fields, including the installation of all-weather fields in a state that needs such fields to offer year-round play.

Governor, the importance of programs such as YAF cannot be overstated. The President's Council on Fitness has found that only one in three children are physically active each day, and children now spend more than 7 ½ hours a day in front of a television, video-game, or computer screen. And yet, the *benefits* of getting kids – and adults – onto fields where they can play and exercise is undeniable. Outdoor play combats obesity and is a proven antidote to help all of us prevent heart disease and diabetes and manage the likes of back pain, asthma, and arthritis.

In late 2014, Governor, the Outdoor Recreation Task Force that you assembled recommended a \$12 million funding level for the YAF, and the Legislature responded by allocating \$10 million toward this important program in its 2015-17 budget.

Hearing into the 2017-19 Capital Budget, the RCFB has again recommended a \$12 million allocation for the YAF, and the competitive grant and letter-of-intent processes administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office have demonstrated a tremendous need for the program. Nearly two-dozen agencies entered the competitive grant round for YAF in May 2016 that resulted in recommended

funding of over \$4 million; and, in a subsequent letter-of-intent process that will help RCO 'size' a supplemental grant round in either 2017 or 2018, there were 132 applications for over \$30 million, with projected matches of more than \$85 million for a total leveraged investment of over \$115 million.

The demand for fields through programs like YAF is also as high as it has ever been. Along with more traditional sports such as soccer, baseball, and softball, we are seeing record levels of participation in the likes of lacrosse, cricket, ultimate Frisbee, and more. All of them require fields that are developed and maintained in local communities.

Finally, Governor, when we invest in programs like YAF, we do several things that are clearly in the state's interest:

- We provide access and an outlet to the outdoors for our youth, particularly those from diverse and lower-income communities who need a free place to play;
- We help people of all ages stay active and healthy and fight obesity, health issues, and disease;
- We enable year-round play in a state where inclement and unpredictable weather precludes such opportunities on regular grass fields;
- We provide economic development and revenue opportunities for communities to use fields to draw tournaments and group play that brings visitors into our beautiful state – visitors who spend money at our restaurants, in our retail outlets, and in our hotels.

In closing, Governor, we again urge that you honor the RCFB's recommendation for a \$12 million level of funding for YAF to honor the outdoor access, recreation, healthy-community, and economic development benefits of this program. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Al Vorderbrueggen, President Elect
Washington Recreation & Parks Association
Director, Spokane Parks and Recreation



Terry Fisher, CEO
Washington Youth Soccer



Andrea McNamara Doyle, Executive Director
Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition



Steve Tamaro, CEO/President
YMCA of the Inland Northwest



Peter Mayer, Vice President

Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials Boys & Girls Club of WA
Deputy Health Director, Snohomish Health District



Victor Colman, Director
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition



Shon Sylvia, Interim Executive Director
Metro Parks Tacoma



Peter King, CEO
Association of Washington Cities



Paul Kundtz, Northwest Director
The Trust for Public Land



John Stokes, Mayor
City of Bellevue



G. Todd Vanek, Mayor
City of Colfax



Will Ibershof, Mayor
City of Duvall



David Baker, Mayor
City of Kenmore

Amy Walen, Mayor
City of Kirkland

John Spencer, Mayor
City of Lake Stevens

Don Anderson, Mayor
City of Lakewood

Jill Boudreau, Mayor
City of Mount Vernon

Sean Guard, Mayor
City of Washougal

Frank J. Kuntz, Mayor
City of Wenatchee

Pat McCarthy, County Executive
Pierce County

Pam Bissonnette, Interim City Manager
City of Mercer Island

Paul Simmons, Director
Olympia Parks, Arts, & Recreation

Lori Cummings, Director
Everett Parks and Community Services



Jeff Elevado, Director
Bremerton Parks and Recreation



Rick Still, Director
Tukwila Parks & Recreation



Nancy Backus, Mayor
City of Auburn



Soo Ing-Moody, Mayor
Town of Twisp



Dave Somer, Executive
Snohomish County



Terry Ryan, Council Chair
Snohomish County



Brian Sullivan, County Vice Chair
Snohomish County



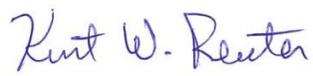
Dan Popp, President
Washington Youth Soccer Foundation



Murray Vince, Secretary
Washington Youth Soccer Foundation



Rob Erickson, Treasurer
Washington Youth Soccer Foundation



Kurt Reuter, Director

Fife Parks & Recreation Department



Matt Watkins, Mayor

City of Pasco



Jeff Wagner, Mayor

City of Covington