

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. **2007 - 339**

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator:	BB & WN	8/2/2007		8/7/2001	Council
Division Head:					
Dept. Head:					
Prosecutor:					
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:

Resolution request to reinstate funding for High Risk Offender housing

ATTACHMENTS:

SEPA review required? () Yes () NO SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO	Should Clerk schedule a hearing ? () Yes () NO Requested Date:
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SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: *(If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)*

Resolution requesting that funding assistance for High Risk Offender Housing be reinstated

COMMITTEE ACTION:

COUNCIL ACTION:

8/07/2007: Council Approved 6-0
 Caskey-Schreiber absent
 Res. 2007-040

Related County Contract #:

Related File Numbers:

Ordinance or Resolution Number: Res. 2007-040

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

PROPOSED BY: Brenner, Nelson
SPONSORED BY: Consent
INTRODUCED: AUGUST 7, 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 2007-040

**REQUESTING THAT FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR HIGH
RISK OFFENDER HOUSING BE REINSTATED**

WHEREAS, as of June 30, 2007, the Department of Corrections (DOC) has cut off housing funding assistance for "high risk" offenders, thereby jeopardizing our community's public safety; and

WHEREAS, the reasoning given for discontinuing this funding was a legal interpretation of financial liability and the passage of ESSB 6157 to take care of future community network re-entry needs; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this legislation is to improve public safety by better preparing offenders while they are incarcerated and then continuing those efforts for those recently released from prison or jail, for successful, productive, and healthy transitions to their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Community Trade and Economic Development Department is required to establish a housing assistance program, not to exceed 12 months, for offenders reentering the community who are in need of housing and set up a community transition coordination network grant program which will award grants to counties or groups of counties for implementing coordinated reentry efforts for offenders returning to community from prison or jails; and

WHEREAS, only two pilot counties out of 37 will be provided grants to eligible organizations to provide housing assistance to offenders reentering the community who are in need of housing and that they must be operated in collaboration with a Community Justice Center; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County does not qualify for a Community Justice Center, even though it currently provides over 80% of the services within a one mile radius of its DOC offices; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County would not qualify for one of the two pilot grants, even though it has successfully, on its own, piloted a housing network using the one month rental assistance that was recently abolished to assist approximately 50 high risk offenders a year; and

WHEREAS, a Whatcom County program designed to safely house sex offenders released from DOC facilities cost \$17,854 for housing assistance for 14 individuals over a 15 month period; and

WHEREAS, without this program, DOC would have incurred \$322,500 in incarceration costs maintaining offenders until their maximum release date; and

WHEREAS, while only two of the 37 counties will receive grant awards, the other 35 counties will receive no assistance and it will take years for all this to be implemented, creating a public safety issue throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, ESSB 6157 addresses the issue of liability by exempting landlords, state and local entities who provide housing assistance to offenders from civil damages arising from criminal conduct of an offender solely due to the placement of the offender in housing.

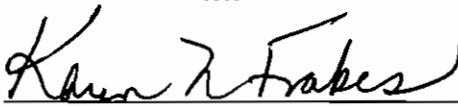
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council requests that Governor Christine Gregoire re-confer with the Secretary of the Department of Corrections and the Attorney General's Office to consider reinstating previous 90-day housing assistance vouchers for "high risk" offenders.

APPROVED this 7th day of August, 2007.



Dana Brown Davis, Council Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Carl Weimer, Council Chair