

**Washington State Auditor's Office**  
**Accountability Audit Report**

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**Whatcom Council of Governments**  
**Whatcom County**

Report Date  
**August 13, 2014**

**Report No. 1012396**

Issue Date  
**August 21, 2014**



**Washington State Auditor**  
**Troy Kelley**

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Independence • Respect • Integrity



## Washington State Auditor Troy Kelley

August 21, 2014

Council  
Whatcom Council of Governments  
Bellingham, Washington

### *Report on Accountability*

We appreciate the opportunity to work in cooperation with your Council to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role to advocate for government accountability and transparency and to promote positive change.

Please find attached our report on the Whatcom Council of Governments' accountability and compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures. Thank you for working with us to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources.

Sincerely,

**TROY KELLEY**  
STATE AUDITOR

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Whatcom County  
August 13, 2014**

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# Audit Summary

## Whatcom Council of Governments Whatcom County August 13, 2014

### ***ABOUT THE AUDIT***

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Whatcom Council of Governments from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2013.

We evaluated internal controls and performed audit procedures on the activities of the Council. We also determined whether the Council complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of noncompliance, misappropriation or misuse. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Open Public Meetings Act
- Donations
- Imprest account
- Credit card disbursements
- Contracts and agreements
- Payroll

### ***RESULTS***

In the areas we examined, the Council's internal controls were adequate to safeguard public assets. The Council also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in the areas we examined.

## **Related Reports**

**Whatcom Council of Governments  
Whatcom County  
August 13, 2014**

### ***FINANCIAL***

Our opinion on the Council's financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the Council's financial statements.

### ***FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS***

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the Council's major federal program, which is listed in the Federal Summary section of the financial statement and single audit report.

## Description of the Council

### Whatcom Council of Governments Whatcom County August 13, 2014

#### *ABOUT THE COUNCIL*

The Whatcom Council of Governments is an inter-governmental organization that coordinates projects primarily relating to transportation issues to mutually benefit the member entities. Established in 1966 as a multi-jurisdictional body, each appointed member of the Council represents local governments in Whatcom County, which serve an estimated 207,600 citizens. The Council has a staff of 12 employees. In fiscal year 2012 and 2013, the Council operated on budgets of approximately \$2.1 million and \$2.5 million, respectively.

The majority of the Council's funding comes from federal, state and local grants along with local dues. The governing officials of the Council consist of an Executive Board and Full Council. The Full Council is a 20-member board comprised of elected representatives of local general purpose and special district governments throughout Whatcom County. The Executive Board carries out the responsibilities of day-to-day Council activities. Mayors, Executives, Commissioners and Council Members of participating local governments serve as Board Members. As of December 31, 2013, the Full Council included representatives from the following local governments: city of Bellingham, city of Blaine, city of Everson, city of Ferndale, city of Lynden, city of Nooksack, city of Sumas, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Birch Bay Water and Sewer District and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District.

## ***ELECTED OFFICIALS***

These officials served during the audit period:

### Executive Board:

City of Bellingham	Kelli Linville
	Jack Weiss
City of Blaine	Harry Robinson (appointed January 2013)
City of Everson	Andy Rowilson (through December 2012)
City of Ferndale	Gary Jensen
City of Sumas	Bob Bromley
Port of Bellingham	Michael McAuley (though December 2012)
	Jim Jorgensen (appointed January 2013)
Whatcom County	Jack Louws
	Sam Crawford (through December 2012)
	Pete Kremen (appointed January 2013)

Full Council includes the Executive Board plus the following:

City of Bellingham	Cathy Lehman
City of Blaine	Harry Robinson (through December 2012)
City of Everson	Andy Rowilson (appointed January 2013)
City of Lynden	Scott Korthuis
City of Nooksack	Tom Jones
Whatcom County	Kathy Kershner (though December 2012)
	Bill Knutzen (appointed January 2013)
Birch Bay Water and Sewer District	Pat Alesse
Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District	Deborah Lambert

Note: In 2014 Roxanne Murphy replaced Jack Weiss, Barry Buchanan replaced Pete Kremen, Michael Lilliquist replaced Cathy Lehman, John Perry replaced Andy Rowilson, and Pete Kremen replaced Bill Knutzen.

## ***APPOINTED OFFICIALS***

Executive Director	Robert Wilson
Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer	Ron Cubellis
Office Manager	Leslye O'Shaughnessy

## ***COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION***

Address:           Whatcom Council of Governments  
                      314 E. Champion Street  
                      Bellingham, WA 98225-4502

Phone:             (360) 676-6974

Website:          [www.wcog.org](http://www.wcog.org)

## ***AUDIT HISTORY***

We perform an accountability audit for the Council on a two-year cycle. The past eight audits have been free of findings. We attribute this to the Council's strong internal controls and timely response to audit recommendations.





## **ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE**

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The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens as an advocate for government accountability. As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

The State Auditor's Office employees are located around the state to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments and fraud, whistleblower and citizen hotline investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our Web site and through our free, electronic subscription service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously. We provide training and technical assistance to governments and have an extensive quality assurance program.

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