

WASHINGTON STATE HIGH-QUALITY AERIAL IMAGERY PROGRAM



Washington State's Office of Chief Information Officer manages imagery of limited quality, requiring many state agencies, counties, cities, and Tribes to contract for stronger imagery independently at higher costs, while others lack access to these essential tools. A single statewide program would save taxpayer money while assuring equitable access by all levels of government from emergency management to DOT, Parks, WDFW, DNR and, to all small and large government units across the state.

In 2022 the legislature passed an aerial imagery study bill (HB 1629) directing that a report be produced for the 2024 legislative session. The study surveyed 435 users of aerial imagery from 34 counties, 61 municipalities, 16 special purpose districts, 6 school districts, 26 tribal governments and numerous state agencies. The study recommends the legislature proceed with funding and implementation of the High-quality Statewide Aerial Imagery Program described in the report.

This bill proposes to provide high quality imagery to cities and counties at little or no cost, saving an average county some \$300,000 in general fund dollars. A conservative estimate pegs the return on investment at \$8.80 for every dollar invested in the program. The study reports the anticipated benefit-cost ratio as high at 4.4 and the return on investment showing compounded benefits of 7.35 over six years. It concluded that "a more robust statewide program would make aerial imagery administration more efficient and save Washington residents money by reducing the duplicity of aerial imagery purchasing at a minimum."

The Washington Association of County Assessors is joined by all WACO members in supporting this proposal, understanding the clear benefit from more equitable, cost-effective access to the higher quality imagery needed to meet state and local needs.

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