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STATE OF WASHINGTON State Auditor's Office	BULLETIN	No. 1999-01 Page: 1 of 1 Date: 11/05/99
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TO: All Political Subdivisions

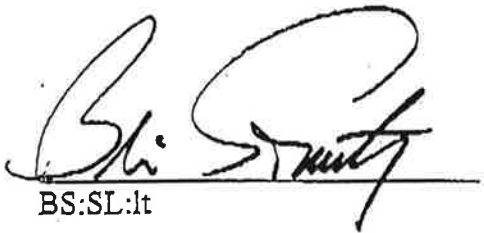
FROM: Brian Sonntag, CGFM
State Auditor

SUBJECT: Salary Increases for Elected Officials and the Consumer Price Index

Many questions have arisen over the years about whether salaries for city council members or county commissioners can be increased by tying them to an index, such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Entities have stated they believe this sort of salary increase would not violate the State Constitution's prohibition against elective officials raising their own salaries during their current term of office or after their election.

However, we have consistently concluded over the years that this sort of salary increase is indeed a violation of the State Constitution. We have stated, and continue to advise, that unless the increase can be foreseen at the beginning of the term, salary increases connected to an index violate the constitutional restriction. This conclusion has been supported by a Superior Court decision, *Telford v. Thurston County Commissioners and Thurston County*, and informal opinions by the Office of the Attorney General. Both these opinions may be acquired by contacting Shawn Lewis on Team Technical Services at (360)586-5074.

In an attempt to be more consistent in our reviews, all auditors will examine the salary increases of elected officials in the entities they audit. If audit staff find salary increases have been tied to an index, they will make appropriate recommendations to your organization.



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