



February 14, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Pablo Nieves-Valenzuela, and I am a government relations manager for Washington County. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 665, which would redirect all funding collected by local governments through the enforcement of fines and civil penalties to the state general fund.

As drafted, this legislation is written very broadly, and would disrupt Washington County's enforcement activities across a range of service areas. It is important to note that the County does not view enforcement as a way to generate funding for unrelated programs; rather, the revenue derived from enforcement is intended to help cover the costs of upholding state laws. Without fine and civil penalty revenues, we simply would not have the resources to effectively enforce these laws.

For example, Washington County's Justice Court is used to enforce traffic violations. In Fiscal Year 2024, we received \$722,000 through our Justice Court's enforcement of traffic laws, yet our operational costs for the Court were approximately \$1.6 million. This number does not even factor in the significant costs incurred by our Sheriff's Office, which funds the patrol officers that identify and cite individuals for traffic violations. Clearly, our efforts to enforce traffic laws are not a mechanism to produce excess revenue.

It was helpful to hear from the bill sponsors during the public hearing on February 12th about their vision for this legislation, but we would greatly appreciate additional clarity on their vision for how to ensure that local enforcement is funded adequately in the absence of revenue from fines and civil penalties.

Thank you very much for your consideration and please let me know if you have any questions.

Pablo Nieves-Valenzuela  
Government Relations Manager  
Washington County