Local Law Enforcement Could Take A Hit From Olympia

Local News

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Hoquiam, WA - Washington's proposed House supplemental budget could have a severe impact on local law enforcement, Hoquiam Police Chief Jeff Myers tells us "They're looking at deferring the liquor tax revenue that cities are receiving to the Health Department. That would be about a $43-thousand shift in the Hoquiam city budget because of that."Myers, who chairs the Criminal Justice Training Commission for the state, said mandated state training has been funded in the past through a portion of traffic ticket revenues.The governor proposed that local [municipalities] would have to pay for 50% of [training], the House budget has come back saying 100%. - Jeff MyersMyers said in a letter to the House Ways and Means Committee that removing the funding source for training officers and prosecuting attorneys would effectively turn the criminal justice clock back to 1974.To hear Myers' interview, click here.

House Ways and Means Committee Members,
The proposed House Supplemental budget, if passed as proposed, will have a severe adverse impact on local law enforcement in our state, effectively turning the criminal justice clock back to 1974.

* Many agencies may opt not to send new hires to basic training since the training is now a fully unfunded mandate under the proposal. Local law enforcement agencies have already approved their budgets and this will be an unbudgeted expense for them.

* Agencies will not be able to send officers to trainings important to the Legislature, as set in statute, such as Crisis Intervention Training, Biased Based Policing, and Child Abuse Training because they have no funds in their budgets to pay these costs. These trainings were mandated by the state and thus should be paid for by the state.

* All officers in Washington are currently trained to the same standards. This change will result in officers receiving different training for the same tasks, putting officers and citizens at risk.

* Since 1974, there has been an assessment on traffic citations, written by local law enforcement officers, dedicated to fund this training (formerly collected by the PSEA until 2009). Although times are tough, the diversion of these dedicated funds severs the agreement between local governments, state government and the public regarding the use of these funds, and is inappropriate and puts the entire training system in jeopardy.

* This budget cuts 100% of the training for prosecuting attorneys who pursue cases on behalf of the state of Washington.

The CJTC currently charges local agencies for non-mandated training. The agency has already made the required budget reductions. The traffic ticket assessment has paid for mandated training for local law enforcement and prosecutors and these funds are still being collected today. This funding relationship should be retained.