WIOA Task Force/Subcommittee	**Local Governance and Sectors**
Recommendation	*The Steering Committee recommends approval of the key points for a regions policy. The policy will guide the assignment of workforce regions and clarify the responsibilities of the state, local area and newly formed regions under the Act.*
Background	Workforce regions are a new provision of WIOA. Under the Act the Governor must develop a policy for the assignment of workforce regions prior to the submission of the state plan. Once workforce regions are assigned they must be integrated into the state plan, and the local areas must submit plans that are aligned with workforce regions. Where more than one local area is included in a region, a single workforce plan must be developed for the entire region. The Act also requires consultation with local workforce development boards and chief elected officials prior to the assignment of workforce regions. On June 1, 2015, the Workforce Board requested input (see attached letter) from the local workforce development boards and chief elected officials on the following questions related to workforce regions: • What are the opportunities provided by regional workforce planning? • What factors should be taken into consideration in the development of workforce regions? • Are there Local Workforce Development Area boundaries that you would like to better align with workforce regions? • Are there specific workforce regions that you would recommend and why? • What will make the implementation of workforce regions difficult? A regions taskforce (see attached charter) convened on July 14, 2015 to review the requirements of the Act and input from the local areas (see attached summary of local input). The taskforce reviewed the suggested key points for the development of a regions policy. Task force members asked that the policy mirror the law as closely as possible, and unanimously adopted the attached key points. A few additions were recommended to the policy, which are highlighted in yellow. Staff also recommends adding the key points (highlighted in blue) to clarify the process by which regions are assigned and integrated into the planning process.
Who was engaged in this process? *(Please provide a list of subcommittee or task force members and who they represent)*	• Chief Elected Officials • Local Workforce Development Councils • Regions Task Force: o Bill Messenger, Washington State Labor Council o Caitlyn Jekel, Washington State Labor Council o Amy Andersen, Association of Washington Businesses

	o Patrick Baldoz, South Central WDC o Cynthia Forland, ESD o Cheryl Fambles, Pac Mtn WCD o Gay Dubigk, Northwest WA WDC o Erin Monroe, Snohomish County WDC o Dave Petersen, North Central WDC o Bob Potter, ESD Partner Kitsap County o Scott Wheeler, ESD o Eric Wolf, WA Workforce Board o Xandre Chateaubriand, Office of the Governor o Agnes Balassa, Staff, ESD o Dave Wallace, Staff WTB • Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee: o Creigh H. Agnew, business o Bill Messenger, Washington State Labor Council o Caitlyn Jekel, Washington State Labor Council o Agnes Balassa, Staff, ESD o Dave Wallace, Staff WTB o Dale Peinecke, ESD o Mark Mattke, Spokane o Marlena Sessions, Sea-King WDC o Carolyn McKinnon, Commerce o Kathy Goebel, SBTC o Betty Klattenhoff, OSPI o David Stillman, DSHS/TANF o Katie Mirkovich, DVR o David Kaz, Seattle Jobs Initiative o Mark Adreon, DSB o William Durden, SBCTC-BEdA o Jeanne Bennett, SWWDC o Elizabeth Iaukea, SOS/WA State Libraries. o
What, if any, is the minority recommendation?	The regions policy talking points and additions to those talking points were unanimously adopted by the regions task force.
Are there any unresolved issues?	The identification of workforce regions remains unresolved.

Key points that will become part of the WIOA regions policy

Requirement to identify regions

- The Governor must develop a policy for designating regions prior to submission of the state plan in order to receive WIOA title I-B adult, dislocated worker, and youth allotments. (citation: WIOA section 106(a)(1) & NPRM section 679.21(b))

Purpose of regions

- Workforce regions must be identified for the purpose of
    - aligning workforce development resources to regional economies to ensure coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers
    - ensuring that training and employment serves support economic growth and related employment opportunities and are meeting the skill competency requirements of the regions.
    - facilitating alignment of workforce development activities with regional economic development activities.
    - better supporting the execution and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways.
      (citation: NPRM section 679.200)

Requirements for the identification of regions

- The state shall identify workforce regions after consultation with the local boards and chief elected officials consistent with the considerations described in subsection 106(b)(1)(B)((citation: WIOA Section 106(a)(1)):

    - consistent with labor market areas* in the state;
    - consistent with regional economic development areas in the state; and
    - have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of this Act, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.
    - The Governor may consider additional factors for the identification of workforce regions as suggested in NPRM 679.210(c) to include population centers, commuting patterns, industrial composition, and location quotients to define workforce planning regions.
    - The Governor may also consider ground level intelligence gained from consultation with the local boards and chief elected officials among the factors for the identification of workforce regions.

      *LABOR MARKET AREA: the term ‘‘labor market area’’ means an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence. Such an area shall be identified in accordance with criteria used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor in defining such areas or similar criteria established by a Governor. (citation: WIOA section 3(30))

- The state shall identify which workforce regions consist of one local area that is aligned with the region; two or more local areas that are (collectively) aligned with the region (referred to as planning regions); or which are interstate areas contained within 2 or more states, and consist of labor market areas, economic development areas, or other appropriate contiguous subareas of those States. (citation: WIOA sec. 106(a)(2)

- Workforce regions of more than one local area will only include contiguous local areas. (citation: CFR 679.200(d)(2))

- Local areas will not be split among regions (citation679.200(d)(1))

- The identification of regions does not replace, eliminate or redraw local area boundaries, unless chief elected officials determine that they wish to change the boundaries of existing local areas (citation: WIOA 106(b)(2)).

- Participation in a workforce region does not in any way diminish the authority of the local workforce development boards or the chief elected officials.

- The state continues to support and encourage the collaboration of local workforce areas and workforce regions. Workforce regions and local workforce areas may collaborate with any other region and/or local area within the state or across state boundaries to achieve mutual goals.

- The state will work with local workforce development areas and regions to address issues that limit the ability of in-state and cross-state regions to fulfill their responsibilities for joint planning and implementation. The state will work with the administrations in adjoining states to remove obstacles to planning and implementation of cross-state workforce regions.

Regional planning

- The state, after consultation with local workforce development boards and chief elected officials for the planning regions, shall require the local boards and chief elected officials to engage in a regional planning process and prepare, submit, and obtain approval of a ***single regional plan*** that incorporates local plans for each of the local areas in the planning region. (citation: WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(2)).

- Local areas within a planning region will only submit one regional plan.

- The planning process shall result in—
    - the establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements;
    - the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region;
    - the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the State);
    - the establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region;
    - the coordination of transportation and other supportive services, as appropriate, for the region;

  - the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers; and
  - the establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in section 116(c), for local areas or the planning region. (citation: WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1))

- The State shall provide technical assistance and labor market data, as requested by local areas, to assist with such regional planning and subsequent service delivery efforts.

- The state will request regions to identify any performance, fiscal, or planning challenges in order to ensure that local and regional planning areas are aligned to support improved service delivery, improved training and employment outcomes, better meet employer needs, and greater effectiveness and efficiency in achieving these outcomes. (citation: NPRM Section 679.200)

Process

- Using the factors identified in this policy, the state will recommend workforce regions in early August.

- Local workforce development boards, chief elected officials and other stakeholders will have 30 days to provide public comment regarding the recommended workforce regions.

- Upon completion of the public comment period, the state workforce development board, taking into consideration any public comment received will recommend the assignment of workforce regions.

- The Governor will have 15 days to confirm the assignment of workforce regions.

- Once assigned, workforce regions will be integrated into the state workforce plan.

- Local workforce areas assigned as part of regions will submit regional plans as described above by XXXXX

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
128 – 10th Avenue, S.W. • PO Box 43105 • Olympia, WA 98504-3105
Phone: (360) 709-4600 • Fax: (360) 586-5862 • Web: www.wtb.wa.gov • Email: workforce@wtb.wa.gov

June 1, 2015

Chief Local Elected Officials
Workforce Development Council Chairs
Workforce Development Council Directors
(See Appendix C for complete listing of addressees.)

Re: Initial input into the identification of workforce regions as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 Section 106(a). Action is requested in the form of:

- Feedback by 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 2015 on the following questions:
  - What are the opportunities provided by regional workforce planning?
  - What factors should be taken into consideration in the development of workforce regions?
  - Are there Local Workforce Development Area boundaries that you would like to better align with workforce regions?
  - Are there specific workforce regions that you would recommend and why?
  - What will make the implementation of workforce regions difficult?
- RSVP by June 5:00 p.m. June 11, 2015 to attend one of two webinars described below.

Dear Chief Local Elected Officials, Workforce Development Council Chairs, Workforce Development Council Directors:

As the co-chairs for the state workforce development board's Subcommittee on Local Governance and Sector Strategies, we have been asked to recommend policy to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) and the Governor for the implementation of various aspects of the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We are writing to you today to ask for input regarding a new requirement of WIOA: workforce planning regions.

Implementation of WIOA provides an opportunity to build upon Washington's many successes in workforce development. Our workforce development system's strong record of accomplishment is due in large part to the work of local Workforce Development Councils and the leadership you provide. We appreciate your achievements and ask for your input to help us develop a recommendation for workforce planning regions to the WTECB and the Governor.

Workforce Planning Regions

Under WIOA, workforce planning regions are intended to align local workforce development areas with regional economies. Workforce regions must be comprised of either a single local workforce area, adjacent local workforce areas within a state or adjacent local workforce areas across state lines. These regions are not intended to replace local areas, unless the local elected officials in a region are interested in doing so. Workforce regions are intended to improve our capacity to close skill gaps for employers and to help more people find jobs by aligning workforce development activities to regional economies. Businesses often reach across local area boundaries to find talent, and people often commute into other workforce areas for economic opportunities. Workforce regions are a tool for local workforce development councils (WDCs) to build regional strategies to serve industry sectors, close skill gaps, develop comprehensive career pathways, and to help more people find jobs. WDCs may also find efficiencies or expand capacity by working in a regional partnership of state and local organizations.

WIOA Requirement: Identify Planning Regions

Under WIOA, the state is required to identify regions with consultation from Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Councils. Workforce Development Councils and Chief Elected Officials are required to design and govern as part of comprehensive, regional workforce and economic development partnerships, once regions are identified.

The state currently has twelve local workforce development areas (see attachment A). The Local Governance and Sectors subcommittee has begun to look at statewide data to identify possible regions. An interactive tool developed by state Labor Market Departments in Oregon, Washington and Idaho is available
at: https://public.tableau.com/profile/ethan.mansfield#!/vizhome/WIOATriStateClusteringStrategies/WIOATool-kit

The tool allows users to create scenarios based on two factors: commute patterns and industry concentration (location quotients). These two factors were identified as the most likely to help with the identification of regions. However, the data is not conclusive. Some industry sectors line up across regions, some do not. In fact some show up in opposite corners of the state. While commuting patterns across counties form natural labor sheds, these do not always line up with current WDC boundaries. In a number of cases, commute patterns and industry sectors cross state lines.

Therefore, maps describing other factors, such as economic development areas, unemployment rates and other demographic information were also reviewed. Attachment B provides a set of sample maps for your reference. These are not recommendations. They are provided as examples that the subcommittee has reviewed.

Webinars and Additional Data

We invite you to attend one of two statewide webinars in order to provide you with more information about regions. We encourage you to invite other local elected officials, WDC members and staff to participate. Webinars are scheduled for

- Tuesday, June 16 from 3:00 to 4:00, or
- Wednesday, June 17 from 10:00 to 11:00

Please register by 5:00 on June 11, 2015 to reserve your spot.

To register for the June 16 session, session, go to: https://wadismeetings.webex.com/wadismeetings/k2/j.php?MTID=taece90443ec9f9137f0b347c1bed2da5 and click in the "Register" button.

To register for the June 17 session, session, go to: to https://wadismeetings.webex.com/wadismeetings/k2/j.php?MTID=t1bb5055c9fe3e32e54524795bfa8b4c2 and click in the "Register" button.

Once you are approved by the host, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Input Requested

In order to develop a recommendation and policy regarding workforce planning regions, we would appreciate receiving your feedback on the following questions.

- What opportunities do you see in regional planning?
- What factors should be taken into consideration in the development of planning regions?
- Are there Local Workforce Development Area boundaries that you would like to better align with planning regions?
- Are there specific planning regions that you would recommend and why?
- What will make the implementation of regions difficult?

Please forward your responses by email by 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 2015 to: abalassa@esd.wa.gov.

Next Steps

The Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee will review your feedback and develop one or more regional planning maps. These will be submitted for public comment in early August, prior to consideration by the state Workforce Education and Coordinating Board in September. State Workforce Education and Coordinating Board and Local Governance and Sectors subcommittee meetings are public meetings. Information about upcoming subcommittee meetings is available at: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/.

If you have questions

We are also happy to set up meetings with local areas to discuss questions or issues.

If you need any further information, please contact Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee staff:
Agnes Balassa: abalassa@esd.wa.gov or 360.902.9571
Dave Wallace: dave.wallace@wtb.wa.gov or 360.709.4613.

Thank you for your input and consideration.

Sincerely,

Creigh H. Agnew, Co-chair
Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee
Slade Gorton International Policy Center (Business)

Bill Messenger, Co-chair

Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee
Washington State Labor Council (Labor)

Annette Herup, Co-chair
Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee
SGL Automotive Carbon Fibers LLC (Business)

Caitlyn Jekel, Co-chair
Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee
Washington State Labor Council (Labor)

Attachments:
- Attachment A: Map of WDCs
- Attachment B: Sample maps
- Attachment C: List of addressees
-

Cc:
- WTECB Members
- Association of Counties
- Association of Cities

Chief Elected Officials

The Honorable Charlotte Garrido
Kitsap County Board of Commissioners
614 Division Street, MS-4
Port Orchard, WA 98366-4679

The Honorable Steve Rogers
Pacific County Comissioner
Courthouse Annex, 1216 W. Robert Bush Drive
South Bend, WA 98586

The Honorable Ken Dahlstedt
Skagit County Commissioners
1800 Continental Place Suite 100
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

The Honorable John Lovik
Snohomish County Executive
3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S #407
Everett, WA 98201

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
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Seattle, WA 98104

The Honorable Ed Murray,
Mayor, City of Seattle
P.O. Box 94749
City Hall, 600 4th Avenue 7th Floor
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The Honorable Pat McCarthy
Pierce County Executive
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Tacoma, WA 98402-3768

The Honorable Marilyn Strickland, Mayor
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747 Market St., Suite 1200
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The Honorable Dan Cothren
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The Honorable Keith Goehner
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The Honorable James Beaver
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Prosser, WA 99350-0190

The Honorable Rick Miller
Franklin Co. Board of Commissioners
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Pasco, WA 99301

The Honorable Shelly O'Quinn
Spokane Board of County Commissioners
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The Honorable David Condon
Mayor, City of Spokane
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Rural Resources Community Action Council
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Colville, WA 99114

Cos Edwards, Executive Director
Benton-Franklin WDC
815 North Kellogg, Suite C
Kennewick, WA 99336

Mark Mattke, Chief Executive Officer
Spokane Area WDC
2000 N Greene St., MS 2158
Spokane, WA 99217-5499

SUMMARY OF LOCAL FEEDBACK

Not all local areas answered all five questions. However, from the letters received, it was possible to identify a number of themes that will help the Local Governance and Sectors Subcommittee develop a recommendation for Workforce Planning Regions. These themes are listed below. In addition several tables have been provided that compile the specific answers to the five questions. All letters received are attached to provide a complete record of the input received.

Themes:

1. All respondents spoke positively of the need for regional planning. Respondents identified regional planning as providing the opportunity to:
    a. Meet needs beyond the means of a single WDC
    b. Bring in additional resources
    c. Effectively serve industry sectors and/or key populations (like veterans)
    d. Leverage and collaborate.

    The letters provided many examples of regional collaboration, most of these related to specific grants and projects developed by WDCs over the last several years.

2. 11 of 12 respondents asked that their local areas be identified as regions. One respondent, Snohomish, clarified that it supported the two-level approach of regions – maintaining local areas while being part of a regional planning area that included the Central Puget Sound.

3. Respondents, with the exception of Snohomish and PacMountain, made relatively little reference to the alignment of their workforce efforts with economic development.

4. The primary concerns related to the identification of regions included:
    a. The potential loss of flexibility. Respondents were concerned that being formally identified as regions would negatively impact their ability to respond quickly and flexibly to opportunities for partnering with WDCs outside of their regions.
    b. The time and effort to develop regional plans. Several respondents noted that regional planning takes more coordination and therefore more time than local planning. Some commented on a perceived need to develop both a regional and a local plan, while at the same time implementing WIOA.
    c. Return on investment. Some respondents questioned whether regional planning would create sufficient benefit to offset the time and energy required to make it happen.
    d. Several rural areas specifically called out the challenge of collaborating over large distances, and the need for people to drive to meetings far away.

Responses to the questions:

1. What opportunities do you see in regional planning?

Snohomish	I view regional workforce planning as critical to the economic health and vitality of our county, the central Puget Sound Region, our state and our nation. Snohomish county has been successfully engaged in regional workforce planning with other counties in our state and Central Puget Sound Region since the inception of the Workforce Investment Act in 1999…the local workforce development council has also been the lead applicant or partner on several regional grant proposals…these grants have garnered critically needed resources to address real time economic and workforce development needs
North Central	A practically bounded region enables smaller, rural labor markets the ability to establish economies of scale to achieve administrative and programmatic efficiencies. This is what North Central elected officials and the Governor accomplished with the North Central Area encompassing three related labor markets was created in 1983.
South Central	When considering regions we ask that you keep in mind relationships drive cooperation and innovation. Opportunities exist where local areas can achieve efficiencies and maximize workforce services to both workers and business.
Eastern	Regions provide a platform to identify critical training gaps that can be addressed with a regional strategy. Prioritize how limited resources should be targeted and determine what funding opportunities should be pursued to address the most pressing/critical workforce needs.
Benton-Franklin	Appropriately established regional boundaries provide an opportunity to leverage resources and take advantage of economies of scale with respect to operational functions, e.g. in-house monitoring, Equal Opportunity administration, fiscal oversight, etc. Additionally, regional workforce planning allows individual areas to pursue grant opportunities that they might not otherwise have the wherewithal to apply as individual WDCs. The rural WDA of eastern Washington, (WDA 8, 9, 10 and 11) have a history of informally working together to address common needs and engage in regional planning.

2. What factors should be taken into consideration in the development of planning regions?

Snohomish	I support the use of economic development district boundaries for those counties included in such districts as boundaries for planning regions under the Act. This will not only increase the integration of economic and workforce activities but will facilitate an integrated approach to business engagement and support within regions and through the state.
North Central	Existing economies and labor markets. The North Central Workforce Area consists of three related economies and corresponding labor market areas – 1. Okanogan, 2. Wenatchee, and 3. Columbia Basin (Grant/Adams)
South Central	Plans need to be fluid and must consider the ever changing landscape of industries, economies, demographics and the workforce. Plans need to be simple. Expending extraordinary capital to plan for planning sake does little to improve regional collaboration and puts further strain on local budgets and workforce resources. We ask you to consider whether a larger planning region is necessary for current workforce areas that are already comprised of a large geographic area; and distinct and common labor markets.

Eastern	Factors will vary by area. For us the rural nature of the area is the largest factor. In other areas, there may be interstate commerce factors that would be significant. We believe regions were built into WIOA to address some of the highly populated areas that have multiple WDCs
Benton-Franklin	A. Labor market data – the formation of a WPR must be supported by labor market data. For this reason we have relied heavily on data to understand industry needs, population densities, labor shed, commute patterns, etc. While the interactive tool you provided was very helpful, it was insufficiently detailed to provide a more thorough picture of the region…A careful review of the data – with actual numbers rather than percentages – a clear and unambiguous picture emerges wherein WDA 11 stands out as an economically unique area. B. Organizational capacity – the stark reality is that WIOA dramatically expands the responsibilities of WDCs. For instance, WIOA Sec. 106(c) mandates an additional eight planning components specifically driven by the regional planning process, without a corresponding increase in funding. C. Substantive impact…a key factor in designating WPR is the reasonable expectation that it will meet the needs of employers and job seekers. Needless to say, in its worst form, the creation of artificial regions become little more than additional layers of bureaucracy, putting added pressure on already limited resources. D. Ground level intelligence – It is our hope that weight will be given to the feedback from the professionals who work in the field daily…these professionals have already formed informal alliances that allows them the flexibility to address regional needs without the added scope of work required under WIOA.

3. Are there Local Workforce Development Area boundaries that you would like to better align with planning regions?

North Central	North Central's existing economies align well for a planning region.
South Central	For South Central, the area that represents the most significant shared workforce, shared industry sectors is Klickitat and Skamania Counties with the Oregon bordering counties of Wasco, Hood River and Sherman Counties. These five counties currently form the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD). South Central has been in discussion with the Washington and Oregon Employment Service and the Oregon Workforce Area representing the Oregon counties to discuss formalizing a regional workforce partnership.
Eastern	We believe our boundaries align well for the purposes of planning. Walla Walla county petitioned to be part of our region under JTPA. The commissioners of Walla Walla county believed that alignment with the other 8 counties in Eastern better met their interests then and now.
Benton-Franklin	No.

4. Are there specific planning regions that you would recommend and why?

Olympic	We have carefully reviewed and evaluated the maps and other materials you sent us and have concluded that the best regional configuration for our area is the current

	Olympic Consortium workforce development area boundary. The current boundaries were drawn based on local labor markets and economic development concerns such as industry sectors and business clusters.
Pac Mtn	The PacMtn Workforce Development Consortium and Council are already functioning as a region envisioned by the Opportunity Act. We think your affirmation of us as a planning region will best serve customers and the evolution of a dynamic workforce system. We greatly value the opportunity to provide consultation concerning this significant matter.
Northwest	Data presented by Dr. Hodges, Western Washington University Center for Economic and Business Research indicates that commuting patterns show that relatively few residents of our 4 county region commute out of our region for work. That appears true in terms of absolute numbers of those who travel out of region for work, and in terms of the percentage of the population who do so. It shows most dramatically in comparison to other areas of the state where significantly greater percentages of residents travel outside the WDA for work. Northwest Workforce Council believes that our current Workforce Development Area, consisting of Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island Counties is itself a distinct labor market and therefore planning region, and we request that designation going forward under the WIOA.
Snohomish	I am in complete support of the two tiered approach to workforce development envisioned in the Act within the State of Washington in which Snohomish County is a local workforce development area within a unified planning region including other counties in the Central Puget Sound Economic Development District. The Snohomish County local workforce area be included in a regional planning area that aligns with the federally-designated Central Puget Sound Region Economic Development District comprised of Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties.
SeaKing	The WDC is excited for the opportunity to continue its efforts in industry-driven regional planning. As described above, the WDC has excelled in its ability to convene industry leaders regionally and statewide to effectively serve a vast and diverse economy and workforce. Maintaining the designation of King County as its own workforce region will allow the WDC to continue to build on strong partnerships that lead to innovative workforce solutions. **For these reasons, we strongly recommend that Seattle-King County be designated as a region unto itself for the purposes of regional planning as described in WIOA.**
Workforce Central	We do not support the identification of planning regions that include multiple adjacent local workforce areas. Identifying single local workforce areas as their own planning regions allows WDCs the flexibility to strategically partner with one another throughout the state to address workforce issues and needs as they emerge as a result of the natural shifts that occur with our workforce and economy.
SWWWDC	The SW Washington Workforce Development Council is an example of a regional planning area that has grown organically and is successful. We intend to maintain our regional collaborative by conducting WIOA aligned regional planning within our 6 county, bi-state region. Our process is underway and we expect to align our regional plan with our local and state plan. Our partners in Oregon will do the same. We respectfully request that the State of Washington designate our workforce development area (WDA 7) as a region that falls within the boundaries of our current area: Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.
North	The North Central Planning Region. It consists of three related economics. No other

Central	eastern Washington economies share the same employers and employees.
North Central	North Central: Agnes, as Chief Local Elected Official for North Central Workforce Development Council, I am suggesting that the current configuration of counties is working to the best of its potential. There are opportunities in regional planning that we are already taking advantage of and the geographic constraints do not lend itself to further incorporation of neighboring counties. The similarities of our five county region are well identified with regard to personnel needs, skills and dislocated worker training. The overlap of the job market is minimal as the primary work centers are a lengthy commute and do not lend themselves to much crossover of workers. We would encourage you to leaving our area in its current alignment. It is working well and continues to provide excellent training in spite of diminishing resources. Thank you
South Central	None at this time
Eastern	We do not have any comment about regional planning recommendations for other local areas. They should be done in consultation with each area's Chief Elected Officials and WDCs. Our County Commissioners and WDC members do believe in regional planning, and think that the nine county workforce development area serves as a region as it stands. We recommend that Eastern Washington Workforce Development Area be designated as a regional planning area for the purpose of WIOA.
Benton-Franklin	It is our contention that in our area, a single WDA as a region is the most logical and cost efficient for serving our employers and job seekers.
Spokane	After careful thought and consideration, the third option – to remain as a single-county WDA for regional planning purposes – has emerged as the option of choice for the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council. This facilitates the continued collaboration with other WDAs throughout the state and across the border based on the circumstances of individual opportunities that arise. Regional planning occurs on an almost daily basis among the partners in the workforce systems of eastern Washington and north Idaho as we all work to create solutions that meet business needs and increase the skills and capacity of our regional workforce. WDA 11 requests designation as a workforce planning region.

5. What will make the implementation of regions difficult?

Snohomish	There are some potential challenges which include increased administrative burden if planning regions are not aligned with federally designation economic development districts where they exist and the loss of local expertise and ability to provide inclusive services to some of the county's most vulnerable residents should local workforce areas lose their identity. There is also a potential challenge of being able to continue being flexible and responsive to ever changing labor market and other economic conditions if regions and local areas are not able to have optimal decision making authority regarding the services they provide. None of the above should suggest that regions and local workforce development areas should not be accountable for results.
North Central	Extraordinary distances within a region make collaboration expensive. And oversized region produces diminishing returns.
South	For rural areas, distances between larger cities and population bases are far. This

Central	combined with severe weather patterns in the winter, limits commuting between workforce areas. Further, with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, extensive requirements for regional planning would be challenging and would strain local resources.
Eastern	The difficulty of layering on regional planning in addition to local strategic planning is the potentially significant cost of people's time and money. Our board members already give up an entire day to travel to and participate in our regular meetings. Many travel 120-150 miles one-way (including during the winter time). On top of this are the additional days necessary to develop the local strategic plan. So it is especially important to have very substantive agendas for all of our meetings. We do not believe there would be enough value added to make a case for requiring the southern counties to regionally plan with Spokane or the northern counties to do so with Tri-Cities.
Benton-Franklin	The innovation envisioned under WIOA, including the formation of workforce regions, is potentially put at risk, given the sheer scope of the structural changes attached to the WIA – WIOA transition, e.g. contracting One-Stop operators, changes in board composition, transition to a new MIS system, piloting Integrated Service Delivery system…all while fashioning the means to connect required partners to the system. Moreover, implementation becomes infinitely more difficult – and meaningless-in the event that geographical boundaries are extended to resemble either of the samples provided in your June 1, 2015 letter.