



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

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Aaron Reardon
County Executive

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Reardon pledges support for measure aimed at bringing four-year university to Snohomish County

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Executive backs Haugen legislation

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today said he backs a measure aimed at bringing a four-year university to Snohomish County.

The legislation, SB 5425, was introduced Tuesday by Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, D-Camano Island, and is co-sponsored by Jean Berkey, D-Everett. Higher education officials acknowledge that Snohomish County is one of the most underserved counties in Washington state, in part because there is no public four-year-university offering baccalaureate degrees here.

“I spoke with Sen. Haugen about her legislation in December and this measure has my support,” Reardon said. “Snohomish County needs a four-year university, both because we are currently underserved by the state and because it is essential for future economic development.”

Reardon noted that in August his Snohomish County Citizens Cabinet on Economic Development called for a strategy to site a four-year university. He added that recently he has been involved in meetings with Everett Mayor Ray Stephenson and a cross-section of County citizens who want a four-year university here.

A Snohomish County university issue was a discussion topic when Gov. Christine Gregoire came to Everett on January 13.

“The governor said this is an issue she wants to pursue, along with the broader question of college access for students across the state,” Reardon said.

The state’s Higher Education Coordinating (HEC) Board recently concluded that the state’s universities and community colleges are not producing enough “job-ready” graduates. The document also noted that every public college is overenrolled. Washington state currently ranks 33rd out of 50 states in the per capita number of bachelor’s degrees awarded by its schools.

“The time to correct this problem is now,” Reardon said. “We’re denying our students the opportunity to get a four-year degree and we’re hobbling our own economic development efforts, too. Snohomish County can’t wait. The state can’t wait.”

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