

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

(Amended 2/02; 2/04; 2/08; 2/14; 9/17; 9/20; 01/25)

JURISDICTION

The IAC Intergovernmental Affairs Committee is responsible for all matters pertaining to mandates and self-determination. In addition, the committee is responsible for matters pertaining to issues dealing with county structure, procedures, management, intergovernmental relations, elections, liability costs and insurance, and maintaining a line of communication between the counties, cities, state and federal governments, thereby providing a forum for discussion of ideas and issues of mutual concern.

STATEMENT OF BASIC PHILOSOPHY

The Idaho Association of Counties (IAC) affirms its basic objective of strengthening county and local government and asserts its belief that counties, as created by the constitution of the state of Idaho, are more than local branches of the state or federal government. The level of government closest to the people must be used for all public functions it can handle. Intergovernmental agreements must be utilized where appropriate to attain economical performance and approval. To provide valuable education and support services that will maximize efficiency and foster public trust in county government. IAC considers the relationship between counties, cities, and state agencies an essential component of performing the duties imposed on counties by Idaho law.

Reserve national action where state and local governments are not fully adequate, and for the responsibilities that national governments can take. We should leave to private initiative all the functions that citizens can perform privately, while encouraging a partnership between local governments and the business community. In order to effectively achieve a partnership of counties and to achieve the goals of county government, the IAC strongly supports the National Association of Counties (NACo) because of NACo's active role in representing counties before Congress and the various federal agencies. Consequently, IAC encourages all Idaho counties to maintain their membership in NACo and actively participate in NACo organizations and functions.

ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government must recognize the partnership aspect of the federal system of government and the inalienable right of state and local purpose governments to participate in the decision-making process of that system. It must further recognize that, because local government is the closest to the citizenry, it is often best equipped to deliver services and administer programs. Strong county government is an essential component and partner in the effective operation of the federal, state, and local government activities. The federal government must encourage early and meaningful involvement of elected public officials and their representative organizations in all aspects of federal decision-making.

ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

The relationship between the state of Idaho and its counties should be one of partnership. The state needs to recognize that the counties are general-purpose units of government that provide services to its citizens. The state government must encourage early and meaningful involvement of elected public officials and their representative organizations in all aspects of state decision-making. Counties will work with the state to secure funding for new or expanded programs, but they need to resist the imposition of new mandates that are not fully funded.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Local general-purpose units of government are the basic building blocks in solving regional problems. Any consideration of a regional approach must be based on the need to strengthen and improve the capability of local government to serve the people.

Issues that cross city and county lines must be dealt with cooperatively. A wide range of alternatives exists for solving regional problems, some of which include: local agreements, governmental reorganization, shared facilities and staffing, consolidation of special districts, etc. In weighing these alternatives, local officials should determine their policies and procedures for implementing regional decisions.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

IAC supports intergovernmental cooperation in the creation of local policies and practices to minimize competition between local governments, to reduce taxpayers' compliance burdens, and to reduce the government's enforcement costs by:

- A. Strongly encouraging individual counties and groups of counties to meet and develop close working relationships between county elected officials, their offices, and other county departments.
- B. Improving technical support for local government by setting up training courses and acting as a resource for information.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CITIES

With the changing demands of government, counties and cities must closely coordinate their activities. Working together, county and city officials should explore areas of cooperation, including local agreements, transfer of functions to the county level, and joint city/county projects. Counties and cities should join in the effort to obtain as much self-determination as

possible. The IAC finds it essential to work with its sister organization, the Association of Idaho Cities, on all issues of mutual concern.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH SINGLE-PURPOSE TAXING DISTRICTS

State laws should have provisions to control the creation and expansion of single-purpose taxing districts to increase their visibility, accountability, and to require them to coordinate their functions with counties and cities. IAC supports simple procedures for merging, consolidating, and dissolving special districts upon finding that the service provided by a district is (1) no longer needed, or (2) can be better performed by an existing unit of local government or a consolidated special district.

IAC supports the creation of a uniform taxing district law dealing with the creation and dissolution of all single-purpose taxing districts.

Historically, cities and counties are the only general-purpose units of local government. General Purpose units of government provide such services as public safety, environment, housing, social services, transportation, and others, due to their broad authority and police powers. In Idaho, the only entities with ordinance authority are cities, counties, and the Ada County Highway District. IAC has supported keeping such ordinance authority only with general-purpose units of government and not extended to single-purpose governments.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Counties and the private sector are encouraged to work toward establishing cooperative relationships to improve the productivity and efficiency of local government and businesses. Such efforts will obtain the maximum services at the minimum cost, thereby benefiting the community as a whole.

ELECTIONS

IAC believes in a system of free and open elections that encourages and increases voter participation. All primary and general elections for state and county offices should be conducted by the county clerks, consistent with the provisions of Idaho and federal law.

1. **Election Consolidation** – IAC supports election consolidation for all taxing districts, including the overall administration of elections by the county clerk, provided that all election consolidation expenses are paid by the state, through sales tax dollars, and distributed equitably to the counties.
2. **Voting Options** – IAC supports early voting, absentee voting, mail ballot precincts, and in-person voting pursuant to Idaho Code.

3. **Federal Election Law Changes –**
 - A. IAC supports the position that election procedures and policies be reviewed periodically statewide.
 - B. The State of Idaho and its counties should be given the authority to determine the best voting system for its citizens and not be dictated to for changes in election laws at the federal level.
4. **Term Limits –** IAC opposes term limits because they already exist through a free and open ballot.

MISCELLANEOUS

Flexibility in County Government – IAC supports the provision of more flexibility in county government.

Biennial Sessions – IAC supports biennial sessions of the legislature, or designation of every other year as a budget session only.

Optional Forms of County Government – IAC supports the availability and use of optional forms of county government.

Technology – IAC supports changes to the law that would enable counties to utilize current technological enhancements. As enhancements are developed, counties will need to develop standards to ensure accountability, security, and accountability for their usage.

Public Records and Records Management – IAC supports consistency and uniformity in handling and destruction of records.

Open Meetings – IAC supports the open meeting law that defines the requirements for executive sessions and the providing of minutes.

Qualification-Based Selection of Design Professionals (QBS) – IAC supports the use of QBS for procurement of design professional services as an effective and efficient alternative to traditional low-bid procedures.

Procurement of Goods and Services – IAC supports aligned thresholds for the procurement of goods and services and the ability to use the lowest responsible bidder to match the same standards used by the state.