

As prepared for delivery

Governor Gregoire's Aerospace Council Announcement  
Olympia  
April 13, 2009

Good afternoon, and thanks for coming.

As many of you know, we spend a whole lot of time and energy recruiting companies to do business in the state of Washington – from green innovators to aerospace suppliers.

It's not a hard sell -- as some in the national business press have pointed out – including Forbes and Fortune magazines.

At the same time, I do not forget for *one minute* the great industries we already have in this state – and that of course includes aerospace.

Washington and aerospace have a long and storied history together. Governors and Legislatures have been building relationships with aerospace and solving problems for 100 years.

In my time in office, I've found plenty of problems to solve and so has the Legislature.

But we need to do more. And that's why we decided to ask an outsider to take a measured, objective, and long-term look at what needs to be done to keep our edge as the state where the best airplanes in the world are built.

That's why we asked for a study – done by Deloitte and publicly released today – which gives us a much clearer picture beyond the usual “issue de jour” that ebbs and flows every legislative session.

Not surprisingly, the study confirmed a lot of what we know, and also found a lot for us to be proud of. And – as always – it showed us some steps we need to take to stay ahead of the competition.

Our advantages include aerospace's wide and deep presence in Washington...it's incredible workforce...a competitive aerospace tax environment...strong aerospace research and development...and this state's special quality of life.

But the study also confirmed that we need to do more to stay ahead – from making sure everybody gets the maximum bang for the buck from the great aerospace training and research programs in this state...

...To something as basic and critical as creating an environment where labor and management can communicate better.

So today, we're announcing an important step to keep Washington at the forefront of aerospace competition...legislation to create the Washington Council on Aerospace and an absolutely focused agenda for the council to pursue.

At the same time, I'm creating an Aerospace Sub Cabinet to make sure all channels are open for the agenda to move forward.

The Council on Aerospace will:

Work to better coordinate and organize all the excellent worker-training programs at our community and technical colleges...to make sure our people have the skills the industry needs when they need them and not a day later.

...I'm talking about the training programs at our community colleges -- for example -- Edmonds and Everett community colleges' joint Advanced Aerospace Manufacturing Program...Spokane Community College's Machining Technician Program...or Big Bend Community College's Airframe and Power Plant Technician Program.

The council will also coordinate the world-class research and development programs at our research universities and connect more seamlessly to our colleges.

Researchers at our universities are developing cutting-edge technologies in photonics, advanced materials, sustainable biofuels, nano-technology and other fields we know are vital to the future of the aerospace industry.

Our research is second to none, and the Council will help us do what nobody in this country does well – integrate it into our many training programs...

...So our workforce is immediately capable of applying new technologies to building airplanes.

The Council will manage recruiting and retention of aerospace companies to create jobs and grow the industry. We will have a one-stop venue at the top of state government to move quickly to create and act on opportunities.

And the Council will provide policy advice to me and the Legislature.

I said there are five tasks for this council, but there's also a sixth -- which is difficult to define.

I would describe it as fostering an environment for super-communication. That's communication among management and labor, research labs and training programs, the state, the aerospace industry as a whole, and the families who depend on all of it to work.

Key Washingtonians will be on this council...from Rogers Weed, my commerce director, to Charlie Earl at our community and technical colleges...

...UW President Emmert and WSU President Floyd...

Both a Boeing representative and a person representing the 650 different aerospace companies in our state...

...And top ranking officials from the Machinists and SPEEA.

The legislation we're pursuing today will help us stay ahead of the curve as we compete with other states and with other nations too.

And make no mistake. The competition is tough. You're seeing the fierce fight with another nation over a new refueling tanker...and some states are showing every sign they will be spending money with abandon to attract aerospace.

As we have for 100 years, we still have the edge and we are still making sure that edge stays razor sharp.

This isn't about a quick fix! As I said – this is not about the issue of the day, important as that always is.

It's about making sure we are providing a level of service the aerospace industry needs to continue to thrive and grow forever right here in the great State of Washington.

Aerospace is our state's most dominant industry. It accounts for tens of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions in revenue. We will make sure our state keeps and grows this industry, and the jobs it brings Washington families.

I'm ready for your questions.

