



April 3, 2023

Dear Vice Chair Mullet, Ranking Member Schoesler, and members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee:

**On behalf of the Seattle Seahawks and Seattle Sounders FC organizations, we write in support of the House Capital Budget's treatment of Youth Athletic Facility (YAF) account dollars.** It's our hope and expectation that those funds remain dedicated for their original purpose of supporting accessible community recreation facilities upon final reconciliation.

In short, our interest stems from our long-standing commitment to youth athletics and the desire to fulfill Lumen Field's public benefits as promised to voters in the Referendum 48. Prior legislative leaders sought lasting benefits for youth athletic facilities, common school funding, community mitigation, and women- and minority-owned businesses among other conditions. Paul Allen contributed the first \$10 million to acquire, construct, improve, and maintain youth-athletic facilities across the state and our organizations are grateful for the legislative leadership that has continued funding this valuable grant program since 2013.

The Stadium Act, as approved by voters, had the foresight to direct any remaining balance in the stadium bond account to the YAF account for the exclusive use for community outdoor athletic facilities (RCW 43.99N.060(4)). Upon retirement of the bonds in 2021, nearly \$43M remained thanks to exceptional stadium and event center management as well as many successful Seahawks and Sounders seasons that included deep playoff runs. For over the past year, we have participated in the Recreation and Conversation Office's Advisory Committee meetings in an effort to ensure this generational grant opportunity can have lasting, equitable impact in all corners of the state.

We appreciate that the House Capital Budget remains true to the original purpose of these funds. Our organizations have committed decades of time and millions of dollars toward youth athletics in Washington State, so we know well the challenges local communities face to meet the demand for playable surfaces for a variety of sports and ages. We appreciate your consideration of those needs and your service to the state.

Sincerely,

Drew Johnston  
Director, Government Affairs and Compliance  
Seattle Seahawks

Maya Mendoza-Exstrom  
Chief Operating Officer  
Seattle Sounders FC