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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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REGIONAL CHAMBER OPPOSES BUSINESS TAX INCREASES RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT FRAUD

TRI-CITIES, Wash. – The Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce opposes employer tax rate increases as a result of fraudulent payments through the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) due to unemployment driven by COVID-19 related mandated business closures.

Chamber President & CEO, Lori Mattson, and Local Government Affairs Committee Chair, Jim Arneson, sent a letter on August 11 to Washington Governor Jay Inslee voicing the Chamber's concerns. The letter is available to read on the Chamber's website.

In the letter, the Chamber also requests that a UI advisory committee be activated to disseminate information, explore options, discover appropriate mechanisms for rebuilding fund levels, and that the Washington State Auditors investigation surrounding the fraudulent payments be expedited - the results of which should answer the following questions:

1. Is \$650 million the final tally of the fraudulent payments?
2. What internal fraud controls were in place before the pandemic?
3. What actions have been taken by ESD to prevent future fraud?

The Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce is the catalyst, convener and champion for community and business prosperity. For further details about the Regional Chamber, visit www.tricityregionalchamber.com or call 509.736.0510.

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