

Proposal for Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in Washington State

Washington State has long and close ties with China. The first ship after the opening of relations came to the Port of Seattle in 1979. The Washington State China Relations Council was the first of its kind in the United States. Gary Locke was the first Chinese-American governor elected in the US. Chinese President Hu Jintao made Seattle his first stop on his trip to the US last April, as did his predecessors Jiang Zemin and Deng Xiaoping.

On a per capita basis, Washington State trades more with China than any other state. Washington State exports to China increased 253 percent since 2000 and 768 percent since 1991. China is the second-largest trading partner through Puget Sound area ports, second-largest source of international students at the University of Washington, and second-largest agricultural export market with exports of over \$1 billion. In other words, across nearly all categories of interaction, China is a huge partner for our region.

China's role in the world economy will continue to grow in the coming decades. Thanks to our historical relations, strong economic ties, world renowned companies, large and vibrant Chinese-American community and President Hu's recent visit, Washington state has unique opportunities to further deepen our economic, cultural and social relations with this emerging power.

It is essential to our businesses and organizations that more of our population has the ability to speak Chinese. A unique opportunity exists to increase Chinese language capacity in Washington State. President Hu Jintao and Governor Christine Gregoire discussed during the President's trip to Washington State how China and Washington could collaborate on increasing Chinese language capacity in the region. As follow up, the Chinese government pledged to open a Confucius Institute in Washington State to further this effort and agreed that such an institute would be a collaborative project with support from both China and Washington State.

Goal for Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in Washington State:

To have 10% of Washington students learning Chinese by 2015.

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