



**Office of the Washington State Auditor**  
**Pat McCarthy**

**Accountability Audit Report**  
**Washington State Department of**  
**Commerce**

**For the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017**

**Published December 4, 2017**

**Report No. 1020215**





**Office of the Washington State Auditor**  
**Pat McCarthy**

December 4, 2017

Mr. Brian Bonlender, Director  
Washington State Department of Commerce  
Olympia, Washington

**Report on Accountability**

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for Department operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our report on the Department's compliance and safeguarding of public resources. Our independent audit report describes the overall results and conclusions for areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy  
State Auditor  
Olympia, WA

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## AUDIT SUMMARY

### Results in brief

In most areas we audited, Department operations complied with applicable requirements and provided adequate safeguarding of public resources. The Department also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in most areas we examined.

However, we noted certain matters that we communicated to Department management in a letter dated November 16, 2017, related to duplicate payments. We appreciate the Department's commitment to resolving those matters.

### About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Washington State Department of Commerce from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Department's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Foreclosure fairness program
- Pacific Tower project related disbursements
- Cash receipting
- Disbursements
- Restricted funds
- Travel

## RELATED REPORTS

### Financial

We perform an annual audit of the statewide basic financial statements, as required by state law (RCW 43.09.310). Our opinion on these financial statements is included in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) prepared by and available from the Office of Financial Management.

The CAFR reflects the financial activities of all funds, organizations, institutions, agencies, departments and offices that are part of the state's reporting entity. That report is issued by the Office of Financial Management in December of each year and can be found at [www.ofm.wa.gov](http://www.ofm.wa.gov).

A summary of the audit for the period ending June 30, 2017, can be found at: <http://www.sao.wa.gov/resources/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>

### Federal programs

In accordance with the Single Audit Act, we annually audit major federal programs administered by the state of Washington. Rather than perform a single audit of each agency, we audit the state as a whole. The results of that audit are published in a report issued by the Office of Financial Management in March of each year.

### Performance audits

Initiative 900, approved by voters in 2005, gives the State Auditor's Office the authority to conduct independent performance audits of state and local government entities. Performance audits may include objective analysis on ways to improve program performance and operations, reduce costs and identify best practices.

We issued the separate WorkForce Development System performance audit report, which is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Commerce's core purpose is to strengthen communities. The agency touches every aspect of community and economic development: planning, infrastructure, energy, public facilities, housing, public safety and crime victims, international trade, business services and more. The Department works with local governments, businesses and civic leaders throughout the state to strengthen communities so all residents may thrive and prosper.

The Department is based in Olympia with regional offices in Seattle and Spokane. The Governor appoints the Department's Director who oversees its approximately 300 employees. For the 2015-2017 biennium, the Department's operating and capital budget was approximately \$1.8 billion.

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*Information current as of report publish date.*

### **Audit history**

You can find current and past audit reports for the Washington State Department of Commerce at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

<b>Contact information for the State Auditor's Office</b>	
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