These recommendations reflect 2015 PSRC Economic Development Action Items that may have associated legislative activities. The EDD Legislative Task Force has discretion to support additional items arising during the 2015 legislative session that advance elements of the RES not on this list.

**Education & Workforce Development**

- **Address workforce gaps for in-demand STEM occupations.** Washington’s education system needs to keep up with the demands of local industry, with a curriculum that reflects the skills of the jobs of today and tomorrow. Many high paying jobs of the future will require workers with STEM education, and there are ongoing shortages expected in trained workers for those jobs.
  
  ► **Support efforts to address workforce gaps in STEM occupations in the state K-12 and higher education system.**

**Business Climate**

- **Support economic development programs that retain, attract and grow new business and investment.** Washington State is limited in comparison to other states for financing tools to help support economic development. Recent budget challenges have left key economic development programs in the state at risk. In 2014, the Life Sciences Discovery Fund was nearly defunded before a line item budget veto by the governor. Funding for Associate Development Organizations (ADOs), which provide key economic development support in all 39 of Washington’s counties was also under threat during the 2014 legislative session.

  ► **Advocate for continued state level funding for ADOs, sector leads and other key state economic development infrastructure.**

  ► **Advocate for continued funding for the Life Sciences Discovery Fund.**

- **Adopt a sustainable funding model to promote state tourism.** Tourism is a significant contributor to our state and regional economy. In 2011, the legislature eliminated funding for the state tourism office and the Washington Tourism Alliance is proposing a strategy to continue funding state tourism promotion activities. Under legislation passed earlier in 2014, the WTA is directed to report back to the legislature on a plan to fund a statewide tourism marketing program.

  ► **Support the Washington Tourism Alliance’s legislation to adopt a self-assessment model to fund state marketing activities.**
Entrepreneurship & Innovation

- **Renew tax credits for organizations involved in research and development.** Compared to other states, Washington offers relatively few economic development incentives. In the mid-1990s, the Washington State Legislature created tax incentives which encouraged growth in the technology and biotechnology industries by offering long-term certainty. They included the High Technology B&O tax credit for R&D Spending and the High Technology Sales & Use Tax Deferral/Waiver. These tax credits are set to expire by the end of 2014.
  
  - Support the renewal of state Research & Development tax credits.

Infrastructure

- **Adopt a comprehensive state transportation package which incorporates regional priorities and supports Transportation 2040.** New transportation investments are required for the business and population growth associated with Washington’s past successes and to prepare for the future. The state must continue to invest in transportation, including highways, ports, and transit, to move products to market and get people to and from employment centers. Other regions are making these investments, regions that we are competing with for the world’s top talent and businesses. This session, the legislature will be addressing a statewide transportation package, as well as authorization for additional funding sources for a Sound Transit package to go to the voters in 2016.
  
  - Support the adoption of a comprehensive state transportation package.
  - Support the build-out of Sound Transit’s high capacity transit system.

Quality of Life

- **Adopt the Cultural Access Washington legislation to enable local jurisdictions to increase access to the state cultural institutions.** Arts, science and heritage organizations help make Washington a great place to live, work and play attracting talent to the region. Cultural Access Washington will introduce legislation for the 2015 legislative session to allow for funding through local tax districts to increase access to these important cultural institutions.
  
  - Support the adoption of the Cultural Access Washington legislation to increase access to important cultural institutions.