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**New WCIT, TDA International Trade Strategy:
40 percent of Washington jobs tied to international trade**

Provides key recommendations to increase Washington's international competitiveness

Seattle, WA – October 2, 2012 – Today, the Washington Council on International Trade (WCIT) and Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle (TDA) released the *International Competitiveness Strategy for Washington State*. It finds that 40 percent of all jobs in Washington are tied to international trade, and provides a series of targeted recommendations to best allocate Washington state's resources in order to increase the state's engagement and economic returns within the global economy.

"Our elected officials, business leaders and others will benefit greatly from a better understanding of how they can maximize job creation through international trade," said Sam Kaplan, president of the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle. "We can maintain Washington's status as a strong base for global operations through steps like increasing freight mobility, enforcing intellectual property rights, investing in a skilled workforce and maintaining a competitive business climate," said Eric Schinfeld, president of the Washington Council on International Trade.

The strategy is explicitly designed to be more than a simple academic study. Rather, it is meant to be a proactive document for use by key trade stakeholders in Washington, from private industry to public ports, to promote international trade.

"Washington state exports are integral to the nation's international trade strategy. With more than 80 percent of Boeing customers located outside of the United States, having a strategic blueprint that supports in-state businesses and promotes international trade is crucial to our future success," said Billy Glover, vice president of Global Business Development & Policy for Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

The International Competitiveness Strategy provides the most up-to-date assessment of our state's international economy, with analysis of its strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats to Washington's global competitiveness.

It also offers six specific recommendations to make our state even more successful in the international marketplace. These include new insight on a key yet overlooked aspect of our economy: service exports. Specific data on the sources, destinations and value of our state's services, such as IT and higher education, will provide a better basis for leveraging these sectors globally.

"We finally have data quantifying the importance of services exports. That's important as services will continue to be an important part of our economy in years to come," said David Tang, Managing Partner, Asia of K&L Gates. "Although not as tangible as goods on a container ship, service exports like software and tourism are major drivers for job creation. The strategy promotes specific policies –

like strong intellectual property protection and greater investment in promoting our state overseas – that will strengthen our services sector.”

The comprehensive strategy outlines the importance of both exports and imports to our state’s economy. Approximately 25 percent of jobs related to trade in our state are tied to imports, with Washington a primary gateway for Asian goods and home to a wide variety of retailers and manufacturers that leverage global supply chains.

Business leaders in key state industries – from agriculture to software to aerospace – agree that the strategy provides both important insights on how to best move forward as well as compelling data on why trade matters to Washington.

“Agriculture is Washington’s third-largest export, and our industry is very familiar with just how important international business engagement is to our continued success,” said John Stuhlmiller, Director of Government Relations for the Washington Farm Bureau. “What’s exciting about the International Competitiveness Strategy is it offers a detailed framework and the key steps we need to take to ensure future prosperity.” The strategy also shows how the large number of businesses and organizations with an international focus can best leverage each other’s activities for maximum impact.

“The development of this strategy shows the power and importance of collaboration between our state’s international stakeholders,” noted Schinfeld. “This project was a cooperative effort of not just the Trade Alliance and WCIT, but also business, government, nonprofits and individuals; we will need to continue to work together as we begin to implement these recommendations,” added Kaplan.

The International Competitiveness Strategy for Washington State is available online at www.wcit.org/strategy and <http://www.seattletradealliance.com/strategy.php>.

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About the Washington Council on International Trade

For 38 years, the Washington Council on International Trade (WCIT) has been the leading policy resource for Washington state companies engaged in international trade. Broadly respected for its credible and independent voice, WCIT is the primary information resource on international trade issues for elected representatives, business leaders, the media, educators and community groups in Washington state. WCIT is an affiliate of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Please visit us at www.wcit.org.

About the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle

The Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle is a collaboration of the City of Bellevue, City of Everett, City of Seattle, Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, Pierce County Government, Port of Everett, Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma, Snohomish County Government, and union leadership to promote, connect and educate the Greater Seattle region internationally for trade and business. The mission of the Trade Alliance is to promote the region in international markets, connect the region—its businesses and organizations—to those markets, bring the region together to be more successful internationally and to educate our region on the importance of international business broadly defined. Please visit us at <http://www.seattletradealliance.com/>