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Rural communities face an average rate of 0.2 percent unemployment (higher than urban areas) according to the state Employment Security Department's September report. These unemployment figures combined with the economic study's results show Washington's rural families will likely suffer extreme economic losses and gravely affect businesses and rural economies in the state if there is no permanent Hirst fix.

In addition, the decision will decrease local government tax collections and impact urban and suburban home and land owners. Hirst-impacted properties are expected to lose up to 70% of their value, increasing property taxes in urban and suburban areas as a result of the property tax shift.

To read the full press release and copy of the BIAW letter to Governor Inslee, [click here](#).

Study: Impact of Hirst Decision Will Have Far-Reaching Implications on State's Economy

On October 6, 2016, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled in the so-called "Hirst" case. The implications of this decision have the potential of eliminating all or nearly all new household or exempt wells in rural Washington.

During the 2017 legislative sessions, press conferences of all four corners (both caucuses in both houses) and the Governor's office repeatedly told the press there would be a Hirst fix, yet it didn't get done. BIAW commissioned HR2 Research and Analytics to examine the economic impacts resulting from the Court's decision. The results from the study reveal a significant impact to rural communities and residents as well as other parts of Washington state:

- \$6.9 billion lost in economic activity each year in Washington, predominantly in rural communities
- \$452.3 million in lost employee wages due to the impacts of Hirst, annually
- Nearly 9,300 lost jobs (FTEs) in rural Washington, annually
- \$392.7 million in lost taxes to state and local governments, annually
- \$4.59 billion in losses to the construction industry, annually
- \$37 billion in lost property values in areas impacted by *Hirst*
- \$346 million in property taxes shifted to other properties in Washington due to the decision

The HR2 report indicates that the *Hirst* decision will have exponential and far-reaching impacts in Washington state, with large effects and costs to rural communities.

To read the entire report [click here](#).

