

## Sibling rivalry

Owegy,  
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*Other local elected officials offer a misleading version of Metro's role — a decision for voters to make*

To hear some local elected officials tell it, Metro is the immature teen-ager in the local-government family, the reckless and irresponsible one, the government that shouldn't be allowed to make its own decisions about programs and taxes.

They expressed that view during a hearing last week on what taxing authority Metro should be given in the home-rule charter to go before voters in November.

Metro, the theory goes, hasn't proved itself. It should take on additional powers one by one, demonstrating accomplishment and maturity in one task before being assigned another one.

An interesting theory. One that seems to forget, though, that the "parents" in this little family metaphor are voters. And that's the whole point: The charter proposal should give voters the opportunity to make Metro a strong and effective regional government, not shut off that possibility from the outset.

Metro councilors, not officials elected to lead other governments, should decide what taxes Metro will seek to impose. They, after all, are the ones who must answer to their regionwide constituents. And those regionwide residents don't need other elected officials acting as their go-betweens.

This is not to suggest that every Metro decision has been correct in the past and will be unassailable in the future. Metro has made and will make mistakes.

But local governments do not have a perfect record, either. They are acting like jealous siblings, trying to convince Mom that no one else is ready to drive the car.

Metro must be able to meet this region's needs well into the future. That means it needs a home-rule charter that gives it broad authority to raise money and pursue regional initiatives.

The region's voters don't need protection from Metro. They already call the shots.