

**CITY OF SEATTLE
2007 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**

January 16, 2007

Number 1

The 105-day session began on Monday, January 8 and is scheduled to Sine Die on Sunday, April 22. The Democrats control the Senate by a 32-17 margin and the House by a 62-36 margin. The key issues for the session are education, health care, and jobs.

The Governor's 2007-09 Budgets have been introduced. **HB 1092/SB 5156** is the Capital Budget, **HB 1094/SB 5136** is the Transportation Budget and **HB 1128/SB 5140** is the Operating Budget. Hearings were held in both the Senate and House for initial overviews of the budgets. The Governor has stated her priorities include increased education funding and insuring all children.

SESSION PRIORITIES

Education

Hearings have been held in the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, the Appropriations Committee, and the Senate Education Committee, highlighting key elements of the Governor's education packages, including Early Learning. **The City has testified in support of the Governor's investment in early learning.**

Both the House and Senate held hearings on the Governor's budget on education. She proposes spending \$177 million specifically on math and science. These funds would be used for more teachers, reducing class sizes in middle and high school math and science classes, as well as assistance for those who did not pass the 10th grade WASL math. The budget also includes a downpayment for all-day kindergarten.

SJR 8203 would amend the Constitution to provide for a simple majority of voters voting to on school district bond measures. **SB 5028** provides for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district bonds. **SJR 8207** amends the Constitution to provide for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize a school levy. All these bills had a hearing and **Seattle signed in support of these measures.**

Annexation Incentives

The City of Seattle helped to bring forward **HB 1139**, which would provide an opportunity to access a state sales tax credit if an annexation of a population of over 10,000 occurs before 2010. This bill was referred to the Finance Committee.

Crime Guns

HB 1026 and **SB 5197**, which closes the gun show loophole, were both introduced. We are working hard to get hearings scheduled. **Seattle supports both measures.**

Infrastructure/Finance

SB 5089, which would implement the Streamlined Sales Tax provisions, was heard in the Ways & Means Committee on January 11. Recent Department of Revenue projections show that Seattle would receive mitigation of almost \$2.4 million. **Seattle signed in supporting this legislation.**

SB 5115 is the Governor's request legislation amending the Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) statute approved last year. The changes include increasing the competitive portion of LIFT to \$5 million, repealing the one project per county restriction, and eliminating the assessed value per square foot requirement.

The Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee will hold a work session on the finding of the Joint Select Committee on Public Health Financing on January 17. The Committee has recommended \$50 million per year in additional funding.

Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The City is supporting a bill to provide housing and support to youth transitioning from the foster care system, consistent with the City's support of the ten year plan. This legislation is addressed and supported in the Committee to End Homelessness (CEH).

The Governor's budget cut General Assistance – Unemployable (GAU) by \$18 million. We have met with House leadership to restore the \$18 million and there is strong sentiment that it will be added back.

The Governor's budget has \$140 million for the Housing Trust Fund, most of those funds not dedicated to specific program areas. We have expressed support of the Governor's addition of \$140 million into the Housing Trust Fund, particularly those funds not dedicated to specific program areas.

HB 1115 which creates new programs to end homelessness will be heard on January 18 in the Housing Committee. We will be tracking that bill.

Transportation

Both Transportation committees will hear updates from Washington State Department of Transportation on the SR 519 project. The House work session is January 15 and the Senate work session is January 16.

SB 5207 funds freight rail and highway improvements through a processing fee on cargo containers of \$50 for each twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU). This bill has been assigned to the Senate Transportation Committee.

Water Trust Transfer

The City and the Muckleshoot Tribe have agreed to pursue an administrative solution with the Department of Ecology. Therefore, the City will not be pursuing legislation at this time.

POLICY ISSUES

Domestic Violence Protections

We are working with the City of Everett on legislation to clarify no contact orders. There have been cases which have put into question whether contact that is not physical is indeed a violation of the order. Newly-elected Rep. Jamie Pedersen will be the prime sponsor of the bill.

Hazardous & Solid Waste

HB 1024 and **SB 5034**, which would phase out the use of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs, which are a flame retardant), were heard in both the House and Senate. HB 1024 was voted out of the House Select Committee on Environmental Health and will now move to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Public Safety

HB 1030, which enhances the penalty for eluding a police vehicle and **HB 1001** combating auto theft, were both heard in the Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee. HB 1001 enhances penalties for auto theft, allows prior vehicle prowling offenses to be used when calculating an offender's sentence, creates new crimes for possessing motor vehicle theft tools, and establishes a statewide Auto Theft Prevention Authority to distribute funds and coordinate auto theft efforts. The bill also imposes a 50-cent surcharge on vehicle insurance policies. HB 1001 is named after Seattle Police Officer Elizabeth Nowak. **Seattle supports both these bills.**