

CITY OF SEATTLE
2009 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

April 6, 2009

Number 12

Last Monday was the policy committee cutoff, and the fiscal committee cutoff is today. Any bill that is not out of the House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees by today would be officially “dead”. The exception are those bills is deemed “necessary to implement the budget” (NTIB) through direct reference in one of the six budget proposals. The House and Senate will spend their time on the floor after today, with the opposite house cutoff coming on April 17 and sine die for the regular session on April 26.

Last week the 2009-11 Operating and Capital Budgets were released in the House and Senate. Both the operating budget proposals are “all-cuts” budgets, without any significant new revenue to offset program reductions. Seattle has been meeting continually with budget decision makers and articulating the program reductions that would have the greatest impact Seattle residents.

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2009

Housing Resources

SHB 1464 passed out of the Senate on April 2 and now goes to the Governor’s office for signature. SHB 1464 makes modifications to the incentive zoning for affordable housing statute. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Public Safety

HB 1498 would make changes to state law regarding when a person's right to possess firearms is revoked after a certain time of involuntary commitment for mental health treatment, making state law consistent with federal law. On March 31 the bill was moved onto the Green Sheet in the Senate Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Regional Transportation

Both the Senate and House Transportation Budgets include \$2.4 billion for the AWW replacement and an additional \$10 million of the Spokane Street project. There is no new funding proposed for the Mercer Street project.

ESSB 5768 authorizing the replacement of the State Route 99/Alaskan Way Viaduct with a bored tunnel was heard in the House Transportation Committee on March 18 and passed out of the committee on April 2. It was amended to include updated cost estimates by January 1, 2010, to require incentives and penalties avoid cost overruns, and to include a single source of information on all components related to the overall tunnel project. Finally it was amended to require the City of Seattle to perform and pay for a number of projects, some of which are the current responsibility of other agencies, or the state will withhold \$50,000,000 from the

Spokane Street project. The project requirements and timelines are such that it could jeopardize the entire project and the \$15.4 million from the federal stimulus package. Seattle is opposed to this last amendment which was also included in the Transportation Budget (**HB 1314**).

Health Care

The Senate Operating budget proposes a decrease of \$4 million for public health during the 2009-11 biennium. The House budget proposes a decrease of \$41 million. These numbers are decreases from the \$68 million currently in the biennial budget.

2SHB 1985 requires local health districts to comply with minimum health standards as a condition for receiving state funding. This legislation passed out of the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee and was sent to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. No hearing is scheduled at this time.

Education

ESHB 2261 moved from the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education to Ways and Means on March 30. ESHB 2261 states that the Legislature intends to monitor the progress of developing formulas, processes, and systems and to begin a schedule of implementation in the 2011-12 school year. The Senate version, **ESB 6048**, passed out of the House Committee on Ways & Means on April 4. **Seattle supports these bills.**

STATEMENT OF POLICY – 2009

Civil Rights

E2SSB 5688 would expand rights, responsibilities, and protections for registered domestic partners. It was passed out of the House Rules Committee on April 4. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Climate Protection & Environment

E2SSB 5138 requires several state departments to develop an integrated climate change response strategy to better enable state and local agencies, public and private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The House Ways & Means Committee passed this bill on April 4. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

E2SSB 5735, by request of Governor Gregoire, was introduced to take steps to implement a regional cap-and-trade program in line with the Western Climate Initiative. **Seattle testified in support of the original legislation**, though the bill has been modified significantly since its introduction. The current version of the bill, though not actually taking any concrete steps toward a cap-and-trade program, does take some worthwhile next steps: 1. It directs the state to continue to be actively engaged in regional and national conversations about the development of a greenhouse gas reduction program; 2. It takes tangible steps toward the closure or overhaul of the Centralia coal-fired plant; 3. It authorizes an alternative fuels corridor pilot project capable of supporting electric vehicle charging, battery exchange technologies,

and providing alternative fuel distribution. It could still change considerably during the remainder of session. SB 5735 was passed out of the House Ways & Means Committee on April 4.

Energy

E3SSB 5854 passed out of the House General Government Appropriations Committee to Rules on April 3 with an amendment that prohibits local governments from adopting residential energy codes that exceed the requirements of the state code. The House version, **E2SHB 1747**, was passed to Ways and Means on March 25 and has yet to be heard. These bills promote low-energy-use building codes; disclosure of buildings' energy use scores; financing energy-saving upgrades to existing buildings; and reducing low-income households' utility bills. The original versions of the bills allowed cities and counties to create a "conservation utility"; this authority is removed from the current versions of these bills. **Seattle supports these bills.**

ESSB 5840 was scheduled for executive session in the General Government Appropriations Committee on April 3 but was not brought up for a vote. While the bill is now technically 'dead' for the session, it has been tied to the Senate Capital budget and will likely re-emerge. ESSB 5840 proposes changes to I-937, the Energy Independence Act. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Human Services

The House and Senate Operating Budgets both make severe cuts to health and human services programs. The Senate budget would maintain the General Assistance-Unemployable account at 80% of current levels, and the House budget would maintain it at 92%. Both cut roughly \$12 million from chemical dependency programs, and roughly \$23 million from mental health services. Both budgets make large cuts to the Adult Day Health Program, with dramatic cuts in the Senate proposal and complete elimination of the program in the House proposal.

Infrastructure/Finance

SSB 5301 would allow the 0.1% sales tax imposed by the County Council to be used for supplanting of existing funding for chemical dependency or mental health treatment programs. The committee amended the bill to allow supplanting of up to 50% in 2010, decreasing by 10% each year and sunseting at the end of 2014. Prior to the amendments the bill allowed supplanting of up to 25% in 2010 with decreases by five percent each year until sunseting at the end of 2014. This bill was passed out of the House Finance Committee on April 3.

Planning & Development

2SHB 1481 was heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on April 3. 2SHB 1481 requires that certain new public and private construction must include parking for electric vehicles and/or electric vehicle circuitry or infrastructure; exempts installation of electric vehicle infrastructure from most State Environmental Policy Act provisions; requires local governments to provide certain parking for electric vehicles; and provides tax incentives for electric vehicle infrastructure. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Telecommunications and Cable

E2SSB 5916 provides that the authority for overseeing broadband adoption and deployment efforts in the state is vested in DIS. It also authorizes DIS to oversee implementation of federally funded or mandated broadband programs and to adopt rules to administer the programs, and provides parameters for mapping of high-speed internet service and infrastructure. It was passed by the House Ways & Means Committee on April 4 and is now in Rules. **Seattle supports this bill as amended.**

E2SHB 1701 provides that the authority for overseeing broadband adoption and deployment efforts in the state is vested in DIS. It also authorizes DIS to oversee implementation of federally funded or mandated broadband programs and to adopt rules to administer the programs, and provides parameters for mapping of high-speed internet service and infrastructure. 1701 is in Senate Ways & Means. **Seattle supports the concept behind this legislation but is seeking several amendments in order to become supportive.**