



CITY OF SEATTLE 2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Number 2

Week Overview

The second week of the legislative session started with a City Council lobby day in Olympia on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Councilmembers Bagshaw, Clark, Conlin, and Rasmussen braved the first wave of snow and made the rounds in Olympia. In all, we had more than twenty meetings, including meetings with leadership from both chambers and parties, key committee chairs, and the Governor's senior staff. During these meetings, Councilmembers primarily discussed ideas to protect key budget items including public safety programs, Seattle's local taxing authority, transportation funding, and also legislation to create jobs.

Later in the week, snow and ice wreaked havoc in Olympia, causing changes to the legislative schedule and limiting testimony at key public hearings. As a result, this coming week will be even more chaotic as legislators and advocates race to move bills prior to the first committee cutoff.

Areas of Primary Focus

Protecting the most vulnerable

Human Trafficking: The legislature introduced a package of bills to address the problem of human sex trafficking in our state, including [SB 6251](#) to criminalize the advertising of minors as a class C felony, which is prime sponsored by Senator Kohl-Welles. **Seattle supports this legislation** and we look forward to working with legislators to craft as strong of a bill as possible. This bill is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Friday, January 27th.

Education

Next week, the legislature will be holding hearings on a variety of bills related to Washington's K12 education system, including proposals to change teacher and principal evaluation systems and legislation to create charter schools. We are reviewing and watching this legislation.

Economic development

Transportation Package: Governor Gregoire has proposed a \$3.8 billion transportation package. Details were released late in the week. Much of the package is funded through a significant fee on petroleum of \$1.50 per barrel as well as considerable increases to other transportation-related fees. The proposal also includes additional local funding options, including a 1% motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) for counties and additional transportation benefit district flexibility. The City is still analyzing the legislation and formulating feedback. The bill is scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday.

Public safety

Medical Marijuana: The Senate Health Care Committee held a public hearing on ([SB 6265](#)). **Kelsey Beck testified in support of this legislation on behalf of the City** because it provides additional clarity and regulatory authority for local jurisdictions, while preserving access for patients.

DWLS3: Senator Adam Kline has sponsored legislation ([SB 6284](#)) to authorize a civil collection process for unpaid traffic fines, removing the requirement for law enforcement intervention for the failure to appear and pay the traffic ticket. **Seattle supports this legislation** and we are working closely with representatives from the law enforcement community on potential amendments that would lead them to support the bill.

City fiscal health

Local Revenue Authority: At the request of Governor Gregoire, legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate that would have the state take over the administration of local B&O taxes ([SB 6176](#) and [HB 2490](#)). **Seattle opposes this legislation because it would result in an estimated loss of \$23-43 million a year in City revenue**, necessitating additional cuts to the City's budget. In the House, Rep. Reuven Carlyle prime sponsored the legislation in order to be able to be in a better position to ensure an outcome that is revenue neutral to Seattle and the other cities. Seattle is working with the other major B&O cities on a common portal that will simplify tax filing for businesses.

Other Issues of Significant Interest

Marriage Equality: Both bills on marriage equality ([SB 6239](#) and [HB 2516](#)) are scheduled for public hearings on Monday, and the Senate is getting very close to having enough votes to pass the measure. **Seattle supports this legislation** and will sign-in to demonstrate this support.

Affordable Housing: [SB 5952](#) / [HB 2048](#) to extend and grow the document recording fee to benefit housing and homeless programs was passed out of the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Housing & Insurance last week and has been referred to Senate Ways & Means. **Seattle supports this legislation.** Additionally, [SB 6315](#) will be heard on Wednesday.

This bill (and companion [HB 2642](#)) would reduce the costs of tenant screenings while helping to ensure that landlords have the information they need to make sound rental decisions.

SEPA Modernization: [SB 6130](#) was heard on January 17. Like companion bill [HB 2253](#), this legislation aims to modernize SEPA and promote responsible development by streamlining the process while still protecting the environment. The House and Senate prime sponsors are working closely together on this legislation, and Seattle has expressed our thoughts and concerns.

Product Stewardship: The legislature is considering a number of bills to protect our environment through product stewardship. Carpet recycling ([SSB 5110](#)) was heard in draft form and has now been formally released, [HB 2450](#) to establish a manufacture-funded rechargeable battery recycling and drop off program was heard on January 20th, [HB 2384](#) to regulate and allow for car sharing is scheduled for a committee vote on January 24th, and [SB 6120](#) to limit toxics in children's products was voted on in the Senate Environment committee on Friday. **Seattle supports these bills.** Additionally, the legislature is considering legislation to ban plastic bags, including Representative Fitzgibbon's legislation ([HB 2404](#)) to create a statewide program that would be similar to Seattle's model. **Seattle Public Utilities testified on the merits of this model during the hearing last Friday.** Seattle also supports [SB 5234](#) to create a statewide program to collect and dispose unwanted medicines, but this legislation has not yet been scheduled for a hearing in 2012.

Energy Independence Act: A number of bills relating to clean energy initiative I-937 have been introduced. In particular, [SB 6396](#) and [HB 2654](#) were introduced by the respective committee chairs and will have public hearings this week. Seattle is still reviewing the legislation, and we will seek clarification on the provisions regarding pre-qualification of renewable energy and conservation projects. In short, before making significant investments in energy-saving projects, we want to know that these investments will count towards the renewable or conservation requirements.

Body Worn Cameras: Senator Kline prime sponsored [SB 6066](#), which simply extends the current audio recording exemption for dash board cameras to cameras worn by uniformed police offers. **Councilmember Bruce Harrell and Craig Engelking testified in support of the bill on behalf of the City.** Representatives from the media testified in support of the underlying bill, but they also seek amendments that would modify the relationship between privacy and public records laws. Seattle is reviewing the proposed amendments.

Health Care: On January 19th, committee hearings were held for companions bills [SB 6185](#) and [HB 2330](#), which would ensure that any health insurance plans that provide coverage for maternity care must also provide equivalent coverage for the voluntary termination of pregnancy, within current law and with the exception of a federally designated plan that does not cover this procedure under federal law. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Looking Ahead

The week of January 23-27 will be extraordinarily frantic, even for Olympia. Weather-related disruptions from the previous week pushed much of the work scheduled to be done last week into this coming week, and hearings are scheduled until late in the evening on most days.

In addition, Mayor McGinn is co-hosting and participating in an all-day transportation meeting with other mayors from around the state on Tuesday, and the Association of Washington Cities will hold its annual legislative conference on Wednesday and Thursday, which Council President Clark is scheduled to attend.

Some of the key topics up for public hearings and work sessions include human trafficking, marriage equality, transportation funding, education reforms, I-937, towing regulations, and homelessness.