



## CITY OF SEATTLE 2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

February 13, 2012

Number 5

### Week Overview

This week the legislature hit fiscal committee cut-off on Tuesday, and then switched to floor action for the remainder of the week. The House took an historic vote passing the marriage equality bill, which now awaits the Governor's signature. This week, bills must pass their house of origin before Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm, except for bills that are deemed necessary to implement the budget. Given the complexity of this year's budget situation, we anticipate there will be a large number of bills necessary to implement the budget.

### Areas of Primary Focus

#### **Protecting the most vulnerable**

Human Trafficking: The legislature has introduced a package of bills to address the problem of human sex trafficking in our state, including [SSB 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 it passed the Senate 49-0 on February 8<sup>th</sup>. It has now moved to the House, and is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. We will continue to work with legislators, staff, and other lobbyists to perfect the language of this bill.

#### **Education**

K-12 Reform: The variety of legislation that was proposed to make changes in the way that teachers and principals are evaluated did not pass the policy committee cut off. However, the McCleary court decision and a strong push for reform will make it likely that the conversation on how to improve our school system for all students will continue and could get wrapped up in the budget negotiations.

#### **Economic development**

Transportation Funding: [SB 6582](#) and [HB 2751](#) provide a number of local transportation options, including a city gas tax option. As drafted, these bills could generate \$12 million a year for the City. They also include councilmanic authority for up to a \$40 vehicle license fee in our TBD authority and MVET authority for counties. **Seattle supports these bills** and is working with other cities, counties, legislators, and advocates to develop an effective set of

tools that will help us address our current and future needs in the City and region, including a 1% countywide MVET. The bill is eligible to come to the floor for a vote in the Senate while in the House, it is still in Rules. Meanwhile [SSB 6455](#) and [SHB 2660](#), which would raise transportation fees funds primarily to generate state revenue, are also moving. These Governor request bills originally included a \$1.50 fee per barrel of petroleum, but that was stripped out and the legislation now raises considerably less revenue. The Senate bill is eligible for a floor vote, while the House bill is still in Rules.

Jobs Now Package: The House and Senate released draft proposals to create jobs by investing in infrastructure. The proposal would bond against certain dedicated revenue streams and use the bond revenue to invest in a broad range of infrastructure projects such as toxic waste site clean-up, affordable housing, school construction, and energy efficiency. We are still waiting for the final proposals to be release.

## Public safety

Medical Marijuana: [SSB 6265](#), which addresses the medical use of cannabis, is now eligible to come to a vote in the Senate. **Seattle supports this legislation** because it provides additional clarity and regulatory authority for local jurisdictions, while preserving access for patients. Seattle continues to work with Sen. Kohl-Welles, cities and other stakeholders to craft mutually agreeable language regarding the extent of local governments' regulatory authorities.

DWLS3: [SB 6284](#) reforms Washington's approach to certain traffic infractions. A compromise bill, **which Seattle supports**, passed the Senate on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, by a vote of 35-11, and now goes to the House where it will likely be referred to the Transportation Committee.

## City fiscal health

Local Revenue Authority: Last week, [SB 6176](#) had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee, but did not pass out of committee. Councilmember Richard Conlin testified on behalf of the City. **Seattle opposed the underlying legislation because it would have resulted in an estimated loss of \$23-43 million a year in City revenue**, necessitating additional cuts to the City's budget and important services. The hearing was on a proposed substitute bill that was an improvement over the original bill. Cities still opposed the bill, however, because it would have created an additional local tax collection system that would have further complicated an already complex system. In addition, cities had strong concerns that that once this third system was created, we would be required to participate in it, resulting in significant revenue losses to cities.

[SB 6574](#) allows the City to continue to collect an admissions tax for Husky football games while the Huskies are temporarily relocated to Century Link for this season. **Seattle supports this bill** because without it, we would lose up to \$900,000 in revenue in 2012. Seventy-five percent of those funds are dedicated to City arts programs. The bill is eligible to come to a vote in the Senate.

### **Other Issues of Significant Interest**

**Marriage Equality:** On Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, [SB 6239](#) was passed by the Senate in a 28 to 21 vote, after the inclusion of seven amendments related to religious exemptions. The bill then passed the House, 55-43, and was delivered to the Governor. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

**Affordable Housing:** [HB 2048](#) passed the House by a vote of 55-42. This bill, which is sponsored by Rep. Kenney, would extend and grow the document recording fee to benefit housing and homeless programs. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

**Fair Tenant Screening Act:** [SB 6315](#), concerning the fair tenant screening act, which is sponsored by Senator Frockt, passed the Senate 46-0 and is now scheduled for a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on February 15th. **Seattle supports this bill** because it would reduce the costs of tenant screenings while helping to ensure that landlords have the information they need to make sound rental decisions.

**Transportation Benefit District Rebate Program:** [SB 6215](#), sponsored by Senator Frockt, would authorize a TBD that imposes tolls, a sales tax, or a vehicle fee to establish a rebate program for the purpose of refunding low income individuals. The bill is eligible for a vote in the Senate. **Seattle supports this legislation** because it would give us an option to help make our current TBD authority less regressive.

**Hazardous Site Clean-Up:** [SB 6211](#), which would help accelerate the cleanup of hazardous waste sites, is eligible for a vote in the Senate. **Seattle supports the bill** because it would provide some new tools that could be particularly helpful with the Duwamish cleanup, such as Brownfield Renewal Areas and the creation of a grant-funded trust that could help provide funding for the Duwamish and other sites over multiple biennia. Seattle is working with legislators, staff, and other stakeholders to perfect the bill.

**SEPA Modernization:** [HB 2253](#) and its companion [SB 6130](#), are both eligible to come up for a floor vote in their respective chambers. This legislation, which is sponsored by Rep. Fitzgibbon and Sen. Nelson, 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 supports the legislation** and continues to engage in this process as the legislation is perfected.

**Product Stewardship:** The legislature is considering a number of bills to protect our environment through product stewardship. Carpet recycling legislation, [SB 6341](#), was passed out of the Senate Environment Committee and was referred to Ways and Means, but failed to make it out before cut-off. [HB 2450](#), which would establish a manufacturer-funded rechargeable battery recycling and drop off program also failed to survive cut-off. [SB 6120](#), to limit toxics in children's products was heard in Senate Ways and Means on January 26, where Seattle's letter of support was shared with the committee members. The bill passed the Senate on Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 41-6, but in a considerably weakened form. [SB 6180](#), reducing costs and inefficiencies in elections, would reduce the size of printed voters' guides, is eligible to come up for a vote in the Senate. **Seattle supports these bills.**

**Seattle also supports [SB 5234](#)**, which would create a statewide program to collect and dispose unwanted medicines. This bill is eligible to come to a vote in the Senate.

Unfortunately, none of the legislation related to plastic shopping bags was passed out of the policy committees, including Representative Fitzgibbon's legislation, [HB 2404](#), to create a statewide program that would be similar to Seattle's model.

**Peer Car Sharing:** [HB 2384](#) would regulate personal vehicle sharing programs. **Seattle supports the bill**, which is sponsored by Representative Hudgins. This bill passed the House by a vote of 73-23 on February 10<sup>th</sup>. [HB 2361](#), to allow usage-based automobile insurance, also passed the House by a 73-23 vote on Friday.

**Towing:** [HB 2372](#), concerning fees and rates for tow truck services and vehicle storage, would direct the Department of Licensing to set maximum towing fees across the state. The House Transportation Committee passed out a substitute version of the bill on February 1<sup>st</sup>. While we support the statewide cap, **we oppose the local preemption included in the current version**. We continue to work with Rep. Pollet and other stakeholders in an effort to find mutually agreeable amendatory language before the bill passes out of the House.

**Energy Independence Act:** [HB 2688](#), which establishes a prequalification process for public utilities to ensure potential renewable or conservation projects, is eligible for a floor vote in the House. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

**City Speed Limits:** In order to improve public safety on city streets, [HB 1217](#) would make it easier for local authorities to set 20 mph speed limits on certain local, non-arterial streets. This bill passed the House 96-0 and was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee. A hearing has been scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup>. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

**Health Care:** Companions bills [SB 6185](#) and [HB 2330](#) 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. The House version is eligible for a floor vote, while the Senate bill is still in Rules. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

**Design Build Professionals' Liability:** [HB 1559](#) addresses indemnification agreements involving design professionals. **Seattle, along with AWC and other governmental entities, opposes this legislation** because it protects the design professional not those harmed, shifts liability from design professionals onto governments, and will interfere with cities' ability to negotiate contracts with design professional.

### **Looking Ahead**

Bills must pass out of their house of origin by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. Beginning Wednesday, bills will be heard in the other chamber.