



CITY OF SEATTLE 2015 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Number 5

The City of Seattle is committed to being a safe, vibrant, interconnected, and affordable city.

Week Overview

This past week was busy with hearings for the Washington State Legislature— as legislators are working diligently to get legislation moved through the committees by February 20th. This is the deadline for bills to be passed out of policy committees in their house of origin. February 27th marks the cutoff date for bills to be passed out of fiscal committees in their house of origin. Both chambers are scheduled to be on the floor March 2nd through the 11th.

Councilmembers Tim Burgess, Sally Clark, Bruce Harrell and Nick Licata all traveled to the Capitol this week to meet with legislators and garner support for the City's agenda. CM Licata and legislative aide Lisa Herbold also testified in support of [SB 5377](#), which would require landlords give 90-days' notice on rent increases exceeding 10% of current rent. CM Harrell provided testimony in support of [SB 5608](#), the "Ban the Box" legislation that would prohibit employers from inquiring on an applicant's prior conviction record before determining basic eligibility for a job.

Priority Areas

Budget and Infrastructure

The House and Senate concurred on the Supplemental Operating Budget ([HB 1105](#)) on February 12th, and with the signatures of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, the bill now sits on the Governor's desk, awaiting his signature.

Education

Citing a 61% increase in tuition over the last four years, Senate Republicans unveiled their [College Affordability Program](#) to slow higher education tuition increases. The program begins with the 2015-2016 school year and caps tuition for resident undergraduate students. The cap is based on the average wage (currently \$52,635) in the state, and ranges from a 14% cap at UW and WSU, 10% at other public institutions, and 6% at Community Colleges.

Safety Net, Housing and Health Care

Health Care

Following weeks of a heightened national conversation on the subject of vaccinations, a bill was introduced aimed at increasing vaccinations in Washington State. [HB 2009](#) was introduced by Rep. June Robinson (D) and would eliminate personal belief waivers as a legal reason to not vaccinate. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing and two executive sessions next week.

Environment

A top priority for Governor Jay Inslee, his carbon reduction program ([SHB 1314](#)), continues to see movement in the Legislature. It passed out of the House Environment Committee on a party-line vote of 6-to-5. There were 32 amendments proposed for the bill, eight of them passed. The bill may go to House Appropriations, the Finance Committee or both – as it has fiscal impacts.

Transportation

On Thursday, the Senate rolled out its transportation revenue package, totaling \$15.14 billion over 16 years. The package calls for an 11.7-cent-per-gallon tax increase phased in over three years. This increase is projected to raise \$8 billion in new revenue for transportation projects and \$1.2 billion in new revenue for preservation. The package included funding for several major projects of impact on Seattle, including full funding for completion of the 520 bridge, and a somewhat reduced authority for ST3's proposed revenue package. Also included was funding for the Northgate Pedestrian Bridge (\$10 million), MLK Way/Rainier Ave S Improvements (\$900,000), Rapidride Expansion Burien-Delridge (\$8 million), Trolley Expansion/Electrification, Madison Route (\$8 million), and SR 167.

The package contains a number of issues that will be negotiated over the remainder of session including suggested reforms on prevailing wages, the dedication of all sales tax revenues from the General Fund to the Transportation budget after 2018, and language that would rescind funding if the governor chose to implement low carbon fuel standards through the Department of Ecology. Hearings on the package will be held February 17th and 18th.

Public Safety

Gun Responsibility

Proponents for gun responsibility were visible in Olympia on Tuesday, holding a press conference and lobbying legislators with the intent to block any I-594 amendments as well as support [HB 1857/SB 5727](#) (creating a protection order temporarily restraining gun possession in cases where an individual is found to be a substantial risk to themselves or others) and [HB 1747 /SB 5789](#) (holding guardians accountable for gun violence committed by children, when the weapon is stored improperly). Currently, only HB 1857 is scheduled for Executive Action.

Marijuana

On Friday February 13th, the Senate passed [SB 5052](#), Senator Ann Rivers' (R) "Cannabis Patient Protection Act", an omnibus regulatory reform bill (36 yeas, 11 nays, and 2 absent). The bill aligns medical marijuana stores with I-502 regulations, creates a registry for medical marijuana patients, and eliminates collective gardens.

An alternative bill, [SB 5519](#), the "Marijuana Reform Act" by Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles (D), was heard in the Senate Commerce Committee on February 13th and is scheduled for Executive Session on February 16th. Representatives from the City Attorney's office and the City provided testimony in support.

A House omnibus bill, HB 1461, failed to pass out of committee.

Looking Ahead

The coming week will be a busy one as committees scramble to move bills out by the Friday cutoff. The addition of hearings on the proposed Transportation Package heightens an already eventful week.

OIR welcomes Councilmember Rasmussen to Olympia this week for the annual AWC lobby days on Wednesday and Thursday, and the Mayor on Wednesday for the hearing on the Senate transportation package.