

CITY OF SEATTLE
2005 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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NUMBER 8

The legislature has completed 8 of the 15 weeks that make up the regular session. The cut-off for all policy committees was Wednesday, March 2. Bills must be passed out of the policy committee to “stay alive” for the next process. The cut-off for legislation dealing with fiscal and transportation issues is Monday, March 7. Beginning March 8 the Senate and House will conduct floor action until March 16 which is the cut-off for all bills moving from the house of origin.

SESSION PRIORITIES

Transportation Solutions

SB 6016 was amended and passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee. This bill provides local transportation funding options for counties. The bill would allow counties to impose four local options including a \$20 vehicle license fee, a household excise tax not to exceed \$1 per month per housing unit, an excise tax of \$2 per employee per month and a special assessment of no more than \$50 per parcel. The revenue would be distributed on a per capita basis although unincorporated residents would equal 1.5 in the distribution system. The original bill would have allowed cities and counties to choose from the following options: \$20 vehicle license fee, 1 ½ cent gross weight fee, street utility fee and 20% local option gas tax. The companion bill **HB 1989** is considered necessary to implement the budget. **Seattle supports continued discussion on these bills.**

SB 6012 would make transportation an authorized use for parking and business improvement areas. The Senate Transportation Committee passed this bill which was referred to the Rules Committee. The companion bill is **HB 2242** was not heard in the House. **Seattle supports these measures.**

HB 1179 authorizing high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes as a pilot project on SR 167 passed the House by a vote of 83-13. The companion bill, **SB 5201**, is still in the Senate Transportation Committee. **Seattle supports these bills.**

State Funding

HB 2209 would extend the 0.5% sales tax in restaurants, the 2% sales tax on rental cars, the 2% sales tax on hotel and motel rooms to pay for renovations at Key Arena and provide funding for arts organizations in King County. This bill was heard in the House Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade Committee on February 28. A new version, **HB 2280**, is being written that would extend the sales tax credit and sales tax on rental cars to be used to pay off the debt on Key Arena and provide funding for the arts. Beginning in 2021 a 1% hotel/motel sales tax extension will provide permanent funding for the arts in King County. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

HB 2196 would allow cities, counties and school districts to impose a new local option real estate excise tax (REET). Cities under 500,000 and counties would be allowed a new REET of up to 0.4% to be used for capital projects and low income housing. This authority would be imposed by the legislative body. Seattle could impose this same REET but can only use it for transportation purposes and low income housing. This bill is in the House Finance Committee. **Although Seattle supports the intent of the bill we oppose being the only city or county singled out for restrictive uses.**

Session Objectives

Annexation

SHB 1153 would allow a city annexing an area to put a ballot measure to impose a utility surcharge before the voters in the proposed annexation area. The ballot measure would be on the same ballot as the annexation vote, the surcharge would be in addition to any utility tax a city imposes. The surcharge would be for a maximum of ten years. This bill passed out of the House Local Government Committee and was referred to the Rules Committee.

HB 2120 which would create “urban impact districts” did not receive a public hearing. This bill would have given counties the authority to designate a Potential Annexation Area (PAA) an “urban impact district” and impose a utility tax. The tax money would then be used for infrastructure improvements in the PAA in which the tax is imposed.

Civil Rights

SB 5575 permitting a college or university to maintain a diverse student population by considering race, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the admission and transfer process without using quotas, predetermined points, or set asides passed out of the Senate Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education Committee and was sent to the Rules Committee. The companion bill, **HB 1586**, did not pass out of the House Higher Education Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Clean Cars

SSB 5397 and **SHB 1397** which would adopt California vehicle emission standards in Washington both passed out of committee and are in Rules. A number of amendments to weaken the bill have been proposed. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Firearm Safety

SSB 5131 and **SHB 1687** which would restrict persons found not guilty by reason of insanity from possessing firearms passed out of both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. **SB 5343** (closing the gun show loophole), **SB 5342** (child access prevention) and **SB 5574** (assault weapon ban) did not pass out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Weights & Measures

SB 5401 allowing cities to impose local fees to pay for a weight & measures program passed out of the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee. The companion bill, HB 1440, did not pass out of the House Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

POLICY ISSUES

Education

SB 5144 and **SJR 8202** were passed out of the Rules Committee and await action on the Senate floor. SB 5144 would allow a simple majority of the voters to authorize school levies and bonds. SJR 8202 is a constitutional amendment which must be approved by the legislature and passed by the voters to enact the new legislation. **Seattle supports these measures.**

HB 2123 would require each higher education institution to adopt off campus code of conduct rules. This bill was heard in the House Higher Education Committee on March 1 but it did not pass out of the

committee. SPD Asst. Chief Nick Metz and Bob Scales testified in support of the bill. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Energy

SHB 1009 which requires utilities to allow electronic payment passed out of the House by a vote of 53 to 42. The substitute does allow utilities to charge additional fees or cost to the customer not exceeding the actual cost of providing an electronic payment option. We currently provide this option to customers and believe the substitute address some of our original concerns.

SHB 1010 which requires utilities to develop an integrated resources plan (IRP) passed out of the House Technology, Energy & Communications (TEC) Committee. City Light is in the beginning stages of developing an IRP and **supports this bill**. The substitute bill has language stating the IRP cannot be the basis for legal action against the utility. **HB 1047** and **HB 1059** which had IRPs and established renewable portfolio standards (RPS) did not pass out of the TEC Committee. It is likely SHB 1010 may be amended to include an RPS component. We will work with sponsors on this possible amendment.

SHB 2179 which establishes a process for disputes between electricity suppliers on service areas was passed out of committee. **Seattle opposes this legislation.**

SSB 5101 provides incentives to individuals, businesses and local governments who purchase solar or wind power. **SSB 5111** which provides incentives to manufactures of renewable energy systems. Both bills passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee and were referred to the Ways & Means Committee. **Seattle supports these bills.**

SSB 5098 which establishes efficiency standards for certain appliances awaits action by the full Senate. The companion bill, **ESHB 1062**, passed the House by a vote of 80 to 18. **Seattle supports these bills.**

SSB 5100 which sets greenhouse gas emission standards passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee and was referred to the Ways & Means Committee. **Seattle supported this bill.**

Growth Management and Land Use

SSB 5907 would allow cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to not have minimum densities in accommodating growth. Currently, the Growth Management Hearings Board has ruled that cities/counties in the urban growth area must have a minimum of four units per acre. This bill is in the Senate Rules Committee. Seattle has concerns with this bill and will be working with sponsors to address those issues.

SSB 5619 and **SHB 1639** which would require water quality during growth management planning passed out of both the committees. In the House it was referred to Appropriations and the Senate referred it to Rules. It is unclear what this bill is trying to address water quality is currently considered in the updating of Comprehensive Plans. A number of concerns have been raised about these bills. For example, appears to amend the Shorelines Management Act, without directly amending the Act. Seattle opposes these bills.

SHB 2171 would provide a one year timeline extension for cities and counties to adopt their critical area ordinances. This would allow cities and counties to apply for Public Works Trust Fund money. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Human Services

SHB 1154 requires insurance coverage for mental health services at parity with medical and surgical services. The bill passed the House by a vote of 67 to 25 and the Senate by a vote of 40 to 9 and now awaits the Governor's signature. This is one piece of a larger effort to "fill the treatment gap" for mental and substance abuse services. **Seattle supported this measure.**

SHB 1314 creating a domestic violence prevention account through a \$10 fee on marriage licenses and divorce petitions is now in the House Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

SHB 1483 creating a "re-investing in youth" program and appropriating almost \$1 million to fund it passed out of the House Appropriations Committee and will be referred to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

SSB 5763 is an omnibus bill to provide mental health and substance abuse services. This 200-page bill has been referred to Ways & Means. This is one proposal to "fill the treatment gap." **We are reviewing this bill to determine the impact to Seattle.**

SSB 2163 establishing a homeless program was referred to the House Appropriations Committee. This bill would provide some funding (through additional document recording fees) to support the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. There are a number of provisions in the bill which we have concerns with and are working with sponsor to address those issues. **Seattle supports this effort.**

Public Safety

SHB 1854 and **SSB 5262** addressing the issue stemming from a State Supreme Court decision on Driving While License Suspended statute both passed out of the policy committee. The Senate version went to the Rules Committee and the House version was sent to the Appropriations Committee. This gives courts the authority to enforce traffic infractions. It also requires payment plans be made available. **Seattle supports these measures.**

SHB 1147 establishes community protection zones around schools for sex offenders. We were able to work with the sponsors of the bill to address some concerns we had regarding this bill and **support the amended version.** This was bill passed the House unanimously.

Solid Waste

HB 1731 and **SB 5710** requires the removal of mercury switches from cars before they are they are destroyed. The House version was forwarded to the Appropriations Committee and the companion bill was sent to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports these measures.**

SHB 1488 and **SSB 5515** would prohibit the sale of products that contain polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). SHB 1488 was referred to the Appropriations Committee and SSB 5515 was sent to the Ways & Means Committee. We supported amending the bills to extend the effective date to 2008 rather than 2006. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Water

SB 5338 which would create water courts and **SJR 8205** which would place a amend the constitution to create these courts each had a hearing in early February but did not pass out of committee.

SB 5959 which dealt with a number of issues related to leases of state-owned aquatic lands (shorelines) with the Department of Natural Resources did not pass out of committee. **Seattle supported this bill.**

SHB 1735 which would exempt water storage facilities from permitting requirements was referred to the Rules Committee. The substitute bill sets the limit of 5,000 gallons for the exemption. **Seattle supports this bill.**

SHB 1098 which changes some provision to trust water rights passed out of the Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade committee. A trust water right is any water right (used or unused) that is transferred to the state on a temporary or permanent basis. We are reviewing the substitute bill.

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