

**CITY OF SEATTLE**  
**2006 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**

**FEBRUARY 6, 2006**

**NUMBER 4**

Tuesday, February 7 is the half way point for the legislative session. The first cut-off day for legislation to be passed out of the policy committees was Friday, February 3. The cut-off for fiscal and transportation committees is Tuesday, February 7. Bills still in committee at that time are unlikely to move forward unless they are related to the budget. The House and Senate will focus on floor action between February 8 and February 14.

## **Session Priorities**

### **Transportation**

**SSB 6599** was presented and passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee on February 2. According to the Chair this bill still needs a great deal of work. The bill would not prohibit a regional vote in 2006 but requires that a vote must include Sound Transit and the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID). It includes most of the legislative changes requested by the RTID. It also includes the expansion of the Transportation Benefit District contained in HB 3138 (see below). Finally, it sets up a Governor appointed seven member Central Puget Sound Regional Transportation Governance Commission to develop a proposal to restructure a regional transportation funding and operating system into a single point of accountability. The Commission must issue a report by December 1, 2006 to allow enacting legislation to be approved and sent to a regional vote November, 2007.

**SHB 2871** was presented to the House Transportation Committee on February 3. This bill would prohibit a Sound Transit and/or RTID vote in 2006. It enacts some of the changes requested by RTID – boundary flexibility, authorizes a combined ballot, fixes the ballot title issue (allows more than 75 words), and allows transit operations funding for construction mitigation. It creates a new nine member Regional Transportation Commission which must include the three County Executives, the rest are appointed by the Governor. The Commission will develop a proposal for a new governing entity, revenue sources, and planning authority. It shall also develop an integrated regional transportation finance plan to go to the voters and look other issues relating to boundaries and governance of transit agencies. The new governing entity would also assume the Monorail taxing authority which could only be used for high capacity transit (excluding a monorail) or local transit within Seattle. The Commission must issue a report by November 15, 2006 allow enacting legislation to be approved and sent to a regional vote November, 2007.

**SB 6733** would help to ensure that the Monorail winds up its affairs and removes the motor vehicle excise tax imposed on drivers in Seattle. **SB 6786** is similar in the intent of the bill. The major difference is that SB 6733 would maintain a 5 person board to handle the necessary affairs of the dissolution. HB 6786 would give this authority to the Seattle City Council. **SB 6872** would allow the current taxing authority to continue, after the existing Monorail debt is paid, to be used for high capacity transit in Seattle west of I-5. Seattle, King County or Sound Transit could authorize a public vote to implement the taxes. These bills were heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 1. Deputy Mayor Ceis spoke in favor of SB

6733 and gave tentative support to SB 6872 if King County and Sound Transit were removed from the legislation.

On January 30, the House Transportation Committee heard a number of bills that would provide local government with additional funding options for transportation purposes. **HB 1989** would provide the option of a vehicle license fee of \$20. **HB 2965** would modify an existing fee on commercial trailers. The fee would be dedicated to local roads improvements through a state administered grant program. **HB 3138** would modify the transportation benefit districts to include King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties and allow all of the revenue to be used for local roads. HB 3138 passed out of committee and will be referred to the Rules Committee.

**Seattle supports these bills.**

**HB 3089** which would revise the commute trip reduction program was approved by the House Transportation Committee and now moves to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

### Housing

**SHB 2418** is an attempt to increase the availability of affordable housing using 3.039% of existing state Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) which will amount to \$100 million and will be distributed over four-years in \$25 million increments. The funds will be used for a variety of programs. The REET will not be raised. The bill was heard in the House Capital Committee last week and is scheduled for a vote on February 6. **Seattle supports this legislation.** Thanks to Councilmember Rasmussen for making calls in support of this bill.

**HB 2984** authorizes cities, towns, and counties to implement affordable housing incentive programs. This bill gives local jurisdictions the option of encouraging or requiring a number of tools to increase the availability of affordable housing. This bill was passed out of the House Local Government Committee and will now move to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

**HB 2673** was heard in the House Finance Committee on February 2. This bill sets up a six project pilot to determine the feasibility of a tax increment financing program using local and state sales and excise taxes and local property taxes. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

### Civil Rights

**SHB 2661** which expands the jurisdiction of the human rights commission to include sexual orientation was signed into law on January 31 and becomes effective on June 8, 2006. Congratulations to Rep. Ed Murray and all of the supporters of this legislation. **Seattle supports this measure.**

## **Session Objectives**

### Environmental Health

**SSB 6428** and **SHB 2662** which provides for electronic product recycling were heard in the Ways & Means and Appropriations Committees. The opponents of this bill are claiming large jurisdictions, like Seattle, are exempt from the bill. That is incorrect. Because the City is a large purchaser of these types of products we must already comply with hazardous waste laws requiring us to have a plan to recycle these products. Another important aspect is that this bill will provide easy, no-cost options for our residents to handle their electronic waste. **SHB 2662** passed out of Appropriations. **Seattle supports these measures.**

**HB 1731** would require mercury components to be removed from cars that are no longer useful and are being scrapped. This bill passed out the House Appropriations Committee and is now in the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

### **Firearm Safety and Crime Guns**

**SB 5343** regulating the sale of firearms at gun shows and events had a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee but was not voted out of committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

### **Human Services – TANF**

**SHB 2970** preserves the WorkFirst child safety net program. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that children whose parents are out of compliance with WorkFirst requirements continue to receive benefits. The bill passed out of the Children & Family Services Committee and was referred to Appropriations. The fiscal note has raised some concern. Original estimates had approximately a \$900,000 impact, but at the hearing the fiscal note was for over \$3 million. Its companion **SB 6628** has been referred to Ways & Means Committee. **Seattle supports these measures.**

### **Weights and Measures Fees**

**SB 6365** would increase the registration fees for weights and measuring devices. The bill was amended to double the current fees, which is lower than the fee schedule suggested by the Dept. of Agriculture, and passed out of the Senate Agriculture & Rural Economic Development Committee and sent to the Rules Committee. The companion bill, **HB 2559**, did not move out of the House Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

## **Policy Issues**

### **Air Quality and Climate Protection**

**SHB 2738** which develops minimum renewable fuel content requirements and fuel quality standards in an alternative fuels market passed out of the House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee and had a hearing in the Transportation Committee. The companion bill, **SSB 6508**, passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee and was referred to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports these bills.**

### **Economic Development**

**HB 2818** would form a WA motion picture competitiveness program to provide incentives for this industry to film in the state. The program will be funded by private contributions in exchange for state tax credits. This bill will be heard in the House Finance Committee on February 6. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

### **Elections and General Government**

**HB 1436** which would provide cities and counties the option of implementing a program to allow publicly financed campaigns for local offices is awaiting a vote on the House floor. The companion bill, **SB 6221**, was amended to require a public vote before implementing a campaign financing program and passed out of the Senate Government Operations Committee. **Seattle supports HB 1436.**

## Energy

**HB 1020** regarding electric transmission has passed out of the House 98-0. Seattle opposed this bill last session because it preempted cities from siting decisions related to transmission corridors and gave the authority to the Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). However, this bill narrows it to only those corridors designated by the Federal Department of Energy as corridors of national significance. It also limits it to only lines above 115kv and the applicant must pay for city staff to participate. This bill was referred to the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

## Growth Management, Land Use and Annexation

**SHB 2217** passed out of the House Local Government Committee and awaits action by the House Appropriations Committee. This bill would impose new expensive data gathering and analysis requirements upon cities planning under GMA and would give counties more authority over local zoning decisions associated with residential growth. **Seattle opposes this measure.**

**SHB 2815** and **SSB 6569** which clarifies “best available science” continue to move forward. **SHB 2815** is now in the House Rules Committee. **SSB 6569** passed out of the Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee and is now in the Ways & Means Committee. Generally these bills help to clarify best available science and will provide the development of “management practices” that would primarily be used by smaller cities. In general **Seattle supports these measures.**

**SHB 3017** and **SSB 6701** reaffirm Washington State’s eminent domain laws. SHB 3017 is in the House Capital Budget Committee and SSB 6701 is in the Senate Rules Committee. There were eleven eminent domain bills introduced this year. These bills were Governor request legislation. Some people still question the need to restate case law. **Seattle continues to monitor these bills.**

## Human Services

**SHB 2002** authorizes limited continuing foster care and support services up to age twenty-one. This bill will allow up to 50 foster care youth to continue receiving benefits if they stay in school up to age twenty-one. It passed out of the House Appropriations Committee now moves to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this bill. We believe all eligible kids should be able to access these benefits.**

**SHB 2376** which prohibits the department of social and health services from imposing medical premiums on children in households with income at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level passed out of the House Appropriations Committee and was referred to the Rules Committee. This bill simply codifies current departmental practices. **Seattle supports this measure.**

**SHB 2353** which provides for collective bargaining for child care workers passed out of Commerce & Labor Committee and was heard by Appropriations. This bill gives the state authority to bargain with child care workers that recently voted to be represented by SEIU. If this bill passes the state and SEIU will bargain and in 2007 the legislature would vote on their contract. We hope child care subsidies would increase as a result of the bargaining. **Seattle supports this measure.**

### **Key Arena**

**HB 3233** and **SB 6849** would provide the King County Council authority to impose (or continue) a number of taxes that would be used for arts and heritage organizations in King County and to improve or build a facility for the Sonics and improve the existing Mariners facility. The taxes include a two percent lodging tax, sales tax credit of 0.017, two percent car rental tax and a restaurant sales tax of 0.5 percent. All of these taxes are currently in place and set to expire once bonds for Safeco Field and Qwest Field are paid off. HB 3233 was originally referred to the House Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade Committee but was re-referred to the House Finance Committee. SB 6849 was referred to the Ways & Means Committee. There may be a work session in the House Finance Committee on February 9.

### **Public Safety**

**HB 3205** clarifies the authority to apprehend conditionally released persons. Persons who fall into this category are the violent sex offenders who will receive 24-hour supervision while residing at the new facility located at 1<sup>st</sup> & Spokane. This legislation would give law enforcement the authority to detain a person who is violating their conditions of release by either taking them to the county jail or back to the secure facility. This bill was passed out of the House Criminal Justice & Corrections Committee and referred to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

**HB 2123** requiring institution of higher education to adopt rules regarding off campus code of conduct was heard in the House Higher Education Committee on February 2. The bill did not come out of the committee. **Seattle testified in support of this legislation.**

### **Revenue**

**SB 6385** was heard by the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 1. The companion bill **HB 2671** is in the House Rules Committee. These bills eliminate the state's 5% mandatory assessment penalty on unpaid or underpaid state tax bills and audit assessments. Due to the link to state penalties in the model B&O tax ordinance, elimination of the 5% assessment would also apply to Seattle and any other B&O city.

### **Water Stewardship**

**SHB 2884** concerning the use of reclaimed water passed out of Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade Committee and had a hearing in the Appropriations Committee. **SSB 6730** also related to reclaimed water was passed out of the Water, Energy & Environment Committee. While these bills are not companions the purpose is to set in motion the updating of the rules related to reclaimed water. The rules were last updated in 1997. **Seattle supports these measures.**

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