

**CITY OF SEATTLE
2008 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**

February 4, 2008

Number 3

The first cut-off for the session is Friday, February 8 at 5:00 p.m. Bills in policy committees must be voted out before this cut-off or they are likely finished for the session. The cut-off for bill to move out of the fiscal committees is Tuesday, February 12.

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2008

Affordable Housing

HB 2625 is an employer-assisted housing bill that would provide a 50-cent tax credit for each dollar donated by employers towards employer housing (i.e. down payment or rental assistance) or loan counseling. The bill passed out of the Housing Committee and has been referred to House Finance Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Civil Rights

SSB 6716 and **SHB 3104**, which expand rights and responsibilities for domestic partnerships, were heard in the Senate and House Judiciary Committees. These bills add a number of provisions to the domestic partner status including dissolutions; community property; estate planning; taxes; court process; services to indigent veterans and other public assistance; conflicts of interest for public officials; and guardianships. **Seattle supports these bills.**

SB 6533 makes it unlawful to discriminate in the rental of a dwelling because of one's "lawful source of income" (i.e. social security, public assistance, or retirement benefits). The public hearing was held in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Climate Protection & Environment

SHB 2815, regarding greenhouse gases emissions and providing for green collar jobs, passed out of the House Ecology & Parks Committee. It was referred to the House Appropriations Committee and is scheduled for a hearing on Feb 5. **SSB 6515**, its companion, passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Telecommunications Committee and was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. **Seattle supports these bills.**

SB 6469, regarding urban forestry, was heard in the Senate Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation Committee. They heard the original bill and not the substitute that had been worked on with cities and stakeholders. **SHB 2844**, its companion, is quite different than how it started out. It creates a new grant program for local governments' urban forestry programs but does not require that cities adopt urban forestry ordinances. It passed out

of the House Ecology & Parks Committee and moves onto the House Appropriations Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Crime Guns

HB 3095, concerning provisions governing firearms possession by persons who have been involuntarily committed, was heard in the House Judiciary Committee. This bill would require that the state statute comply with federal laws regarding persons who have been involuntarily committed. This is a response to the Virginia Tech shooting in which the State recognizes they are not systematically reporting to the National Instant Background Check System (NICS) person who fall into this category. **Seattle supports this measure.**

SB 6763, concerning background checks, will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Congress passed the Federal NICS Improvement Act which requires that states report the estimated number of persons who would be prohibited from possessing firearms for a number of restrictions (i.e. felony convictions, domestic violence orders, etc.). If a state reports by July 8, 2008 then they will be eligible for funding for the development and implementation of an electronic statewide reporting system to NICS. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Infrastructure/Finance

SB 6872 and **HB 3291**, enacting the Community Schools Act of 2008, were introduced. This program will enable community-based groups to apply for competitive grants that can help schools that have been surplus to stay in community use. **HB 3291** is scheduled for a hearing February 4 in the House Capital Budget Committee and **SB 6872** will be heard on the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on February 7. **Seattle supports these bills.**

HB 2965 would direct the Department of Revenue to develop a feasibility plan for state administration and collection of local B&O taxes. Thank you to Dwight Dively for testifying in opposition to this bill in the Finance Committee. **Seattle opposes this legislation.**

HB 3244 purports to clarify the definition of customer location for purposes of municipal business and occupation taxes. This bill will be heard on February 5 in the House Finance Committee. **Seattle opposes this legislation.**

HB 3327 would repeal the square footage tax imposed by the City of Seattle.

HB 2437 and **SB 6182** authorize the project list from the Public Works Board. Seattle will receive \$10,000,000 for a Seattle Public Utilities water project. **HB 2437** will be heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 6. **Seattle supports these bills.**

HB 2495 removes the statute (RCW 35.87) requiring a 15 day advertising process and first right of refusal for sale to develop free parking facilities before any sale of municipal property in an area zoned retail. The bill passed out of the House unanimously. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Municipal Electricity

HB 2961, authorizing the establishment of utility local improvement districts for underground facilities that transmit or distribute electricity or communications, was heard in the House Local Government Committee. Telecommunications companies have expressed concerns. We are working with them to address those concerns. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Ten - Year Plan to End Homelessness

HB 2433 suspends, not terminates, GA-U financial assistance of incarcerated persons. For those eligible for Medicaid upon entering incarceration, Medicaid continues and is not terminated. This bill was referred to House Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Transportation

SB 6771 would repeal the Regional Transportation Investment District – RTID. This bill will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5.

SB 6772 would set up a new Regional Transportation Authority in the King, Pierce, and Snohomish region with a twelve member board made up of seven elected and five appointed members. Project authority would include roads and transit with revenue from the existing roads and transit sources and the bill removes sub-area equity. The boundaries would be consistent with the Sound Transit boundaries, not county wide. This bill will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5.

HB 3096 and **SB 6754** are governor request bills that would allow tolling on the existing SR 520 Bridge and/or a new bridge. Its would set up a three member tolling implementation committee tasked to look at issues such as traffic diversion, technology, traffic management, variable tolling and set up a public outreach effort around tolling. The bills also state the bridge will be six lanes with the ability to expand for light rail. Both bills were heard in the Transportation Committees.

HB 2969 and **SB 6808** require the State Treasurer to withhold 25% of the local gas tax distribution for local governments that have a bridge rating below 10 until at least 50% of the estimated cost to attain a rating of 80 or more on a new or rehabilitated bridge has been reached. HB 2969 was heard in the House Transportation Committee on January 31. SB 6808 will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 7. **Seattle opposes these bills.**

HB 2889 excluding car-sharing activities from the rental car tax was heard in the House Finance Committee. Thank you to Councilmember Sally Clark for testifying before the committee. **Seattle supports his measure.**

STATEMENT OF POLICY – 2008

Domestic Violence Protections

HB 2764 adds domestic violence court order violations, punishable for 0 to 12 months for two or more convictions, to the list of offenses eligible for notification by the Department of Corrections. The public hearing was held in the Committee on Human Services. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Education

SB 6522 and **HB 2449** provide for collective bargaining for childcare center directors and workers, including a career and wage ladder. Each bill has received public hearings in their respective policy committees. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Elections and General Government

EHB 1551 and **SSB 5278**, allowing local funds to be used to set up programs to publicly fund campaigns if approved by a vote of the people. EHB 1551 was approved by the House by a vote of 56-38. SSB 5278 will be heard on the Senate floor this week.

HB 2904 would restrict local officials from appearing on publicly funded television if they were running for re-election. The bill excludes official meetings that are shown on television. The bill was heard in the House State Government Committee. **Seattle opposes this legislation.**

Energy

SB 6585, concerning attachments to utility poles of locally regulated utilities, was heard in the Water, Energy & Telecommunications Committee on January 30. This bill places rate-setting authority as they relate to pole attachments under the Utilities & Transportation Commission for municipal electric utilities, public utility districts and rural electric cooperatives. **Seattle opposes this bill.**

Its companion **SHB 2533** passed out of the House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee. The House version took the municipal electric utilities and rural electric cooperatives out of the bill. **Seattle is neutral on SHB 2533.**

Health

SB 6659, setting statewide nutrition labeling requirements for restaurants with twenty-five or more locations in the country and pre-empting local government from doing more until 2013, was heard in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee. **Seattle opposes this bill.**

Housing

HB 2684 appropriates \$6 million to the homeless families services program. The bill was heard in the House Housing Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

ESSB 5959 would provide assistance to homeless individuals and families through the Transitional Housing Operating and Rent (THOR) program and would appropriate \$15 million to the program. **Seattle supports this bill.**

SB 6411 and **SHB 2014**, regarding condominium conversions, will be heard in the Senate Consumer Protection and Housing Committee on February 5. These measures provide a number of provisions to protect tenants in apartments that are being converted to condominiums. Provisions include increasing relocation assistance from the current cap of \$500 to three times the monthly rent, the ability to break your lease early without penalty, and more notification time to the lessee to allow time to finance the purchase of a unit. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Human Services

SB 6222 and **HB 2668** provides funding for parts of the Area Agency on Aging agenda, including respite care, Family Caretakers support, vendor rate increases, and increases in the Senior Citizen's Service Act. The bills were referred to the Senate Ways & Means and House Appropriations Committees. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Parks

SB 6547, prohibiting discrimination in community athletics programs, was heard in the Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee. **HB 3001**, its companion, is scheduled February 4 for the House Judiciary Committee. This bill requires that city and county park and recreation departments track the gender usage of their athletic fields. While Seattle has nondiscrimination requirements for the leagues and users of our fields, the reporting requirements could be unduly cumbersome. **Seattle has concerns about the logistics of those reporting requirements.**

Public Safety

SB 6608 and **SHB 2712**, concerning criminal street gangs, were heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee and House Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness. The House bill passed out of committee and is scheduled for a House Appropriations Committee hearing on February 5. Terry Hayes of the Human Services Department, who served on the task force during the interim, testified in support of these bills. The comprehensive bills include: five pilot sites focusing on prevention, intervention, suppression of gangs, funds for local law enforcement to target gang crime, and graffiti and tagging abatement programs and appropriates \$1 million for the purpose. **Seattle supports these measures.**