

CITY OF SEATTLE
2010 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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We are now three weeks into the first special session. The House and Senate have agreed to raise about \$800 million in new revenue. They agree on how to raise about \$550 million, but they continue to disagree on the remaining portion. The Senate has held firm to its position in support of a temporary .2 sales tax increase, which the House continues to oppose. They are now exploring other possible revenue sources. Negotiations between the House, Senate, and Governor's office continue.

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2010

Budget Safety Net: Do No Harm

ESSB 6444, the supplemental operating budget, passed the Senate again by a 25-19 vote on March 15th. The bill is now in the House, eligible to come to a vote. Negotiations between the House and Senate continue.

2ESSB 6143, the revenue package, passed the House 53-42 on March 20th. The Senate refused to concur in the House amendments on March 25th, requested a conference committee with the House, and appointed Senators Prentice, Murray and Zarelli to the conference.

SHB 3177 concerns funds for affordable housing and is currently eligible to come to vote by the House of Representatives. SHB 3177 would require the county auditor to administer a surcharge of sixty-two dollars for each document recorded and authorizes the State Finance Committee to issue general obligation bonds to provide funds for the housing trust fund. Seattle **supports** this legislation. The House and Senate are currently negotiating the level of funding for the Housing Trust Fund in the capital budget.

2SHB 2782, the Security Lifeline Act, makes modifications to GA-U. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on March 29th. Seattle **supported** this compromise, which includes faster screening and transition to SSI, require chemical dependency treatment if necessary (House budget includes funding for this); and places a 24 month time limit during a 5 year period, although clients may not be terminated until an SSI assessment has been completed. While the time limits mean a considerable number of clients will lose benefits, it appears to be the best outcome possible given current budget constraints. The Mayor and six Councilmembers sent a letter to Governor Gregoire asking her to sign the legislation.

Education

SHB 2893 modifies school levy provisions. Gov. Gregoire signed the bill into law on Monday, March 29th. The bill restores the school levy base and raises the levy lid by 4 percent for all school districts through 2017. This measure could provide up to \$21.2 million for Seattle Public School students. Without asking voters for a modification to the recently passed operational levy, \$7.3 million would be made available in 2011. An additional \$13.9 million would be available if voters approved. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

2SHB 2731 relates to early learning for at risk children. The Governor signed the bill into law on March 29th. The bill says that the Legislature intends to create an entitlement program for early learning, maintain the number of early learning slots in the 2011-13 biennia, and phases in funding over the next several biennia until the program is fully funded. The Governor vetoed the intent section because she stated it was in conflict with the substance in **SSB 6759**, which also relates to early learning and was signed into law on March 29th. It creates a work group to examine the opportunities and barriers to developing a comprehensive plan for a voluntary program of early learning. The work group will examine the opportunities and barriers to adding early learning to basic education and to creating a program of early learning as a protected entitlement. Seattle **supported** both of these bills.

E2SSB 6696 is the education reform bill that would require action plans for persistently low-achieving schools and their districts to target funds and assistance to turn around the identified low-achieving schools, as well as other reforms. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on March 29th.

Public Safety

EHB 1679, the Jason McKissack Act, would reimburse medical expenses for certain disabled public safety personnel. It has been delivered to the Governor and awaits her signature. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on March 31st. Seattle **supported** this legislation.

SSB 6846 allows counties to raise E-911 excise taxes to fund improved 911 services. The bill passed the Senate 29-12 on April 1st, then passed the House 56-34 on April 2nd, and now heads to Governor.

Transportation

ESSB 6392 relates to the use of toll revenue in the SR 520 corridor. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on March 30th. The final version of the bill allows bond proceeds from toll revenue to be used to begin construction including \$200 million for the Westside. It also creates several workgroups that will examine transit connections on the Westside, refinements to the design on the Westside, and high capacity transit

planning and integrated funding. The Governor vetoed the intent section and the section which would have limited the height of the bridge to 20 feet.

Transportation budget proviso: A budget proviso in section 221 of the supplemental transportation (**ESSB 6381**) budget ties public transportation grant funding administered by WSDOT to requirements that local governments provide private transportation providers use of high occupancy vehicle lanes, transit only lanes, and park and ride facilities. Seattle **opposed** this proviso and the Governor vetoed this section on March 30th.

Water Stewardship

HB 3181 and **SB 6851** would provide state funding for local stormwater clean up, primarily through a competitive grant program. It would increase the Hazardous Substance Tax – the existing funding source for the state and local toxics accounts (MTCA). Although neither bill passed its respective chamber during the regular session, the proposal is on the list for consideration for the special session; it is both a generator of revenue and will lead to the creation of jobs when implemented. However, the outcome of a vote in either chamber is still uncertain.

A striking amendment to **HB 3181** has been crafted by legislative proponents. It includes a .85 % increase (about \$100 million a year). A number of additional amendments are being discussed, some which would provide tax credits in certain circumstances and others which would place more requirements on local governments in order to receive the funding. **SB 6851** currently includes a .5% increase – 85% to a new storm water account for local storm water clean-up and 15% to the motor vehicle account for WSDOT storm water projects. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

ONGOING PRIORITIES

Race and Social Justice/Civil Rights

E2SHB 3026 relates to school district compliance with state and federal civil rights laws and was prime sponsored by Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos. The bill was signed into law by Governor Gregoire on March 29th. The bill represents one of the recommendations made by the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. It prohibits discrimination in Washington public schools on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability. It directs OSPI to develop rules and guidelines to eliminate such discrimination, and allows private court actions to be brought for violations of the law and rules that are developed. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

Economic Development

SSB 6889 concerns the governance and financing of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. It passed the Senate 39-1 (9 excused) on March 20th. The House then amended the bill and passed it on March 22nd by a vote of 91-6, and the Senate concurred in the House amendments. The bill now heads to Gov. Gregoire. SSB 6889 allows an additional public facility district (PFD) to be created in King County for the purpose of acquiring and operating the Center once it is transferred from the public nonprofit that currently operates it. The new PFD would be governed by a nine person board, three of them appointed by the city of Seattle, three by King County, and three by the Governor. The PFD may impose a 2 percent lodging tax in Seattle that credits against the state sales tax rate. This bill is part of a settlement of a lawsuit against the state brought by Seattle hotels. Proponents of the bill testified that it will put the Center in a good position for future expansion. The House amendments change some of the provisions related to fund transfers between the convention center account and the proposed new PFD.

Sustainable Farming and Healthy Food

SSB 6343 would have established the Washington Food Policy Forum, but Governor Gregoire vetoed the bill entirely. In her veto letter, Gov. Gregoire stated vetoed the bill because it overlapped with ongoing work of state agencies and that the overall size of the forum (25 members) was too large and diminished its chances for effectiveness. Instead, Gov. Gregoire intends to issue an executive order directing the Depts. Of Agriculture and Social and Health Services, OSPI, and the Conservation Commission to work collaboratively with non-governmental organizations to achieve similar outcomes expressed in the legislation. SB 6343 would have established a Washington Food Policy Forum to advance the following six food system goals: support local food; increase healthy food in schools; reduce hunger; develop health & nutrition programs; and protect resources needed for sustained local food production. Seattle **supported** this legislation.

Water Stewardship

The **Senate budget** contains a **proviso** requiring the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to do an environmental impact statement before declaring the Cedar River Watershed (game management unit 490) open for deer and elk hunting. The City of Seattle/Seattle Public Utilities strongly **supports** this language. We are asking our legislators to help assure that the proviso is in final budget bill passed by the legislature.