

CITY OF SEATTLE
2005 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

MARCH 21, 2005

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March 16 was the cut-off for bills to move from their house of origin. As always this does not pertain to bills that are "necessary to implement the budget" as determined by the legislature. The committees will meet for the next two weeks to hold hearings on the bills that moved over from the opposite chamber. April 1 is the next cut-off for the policy committees and April 4 is the cut-off for fiscal matters.

Governor Gregoire is expected to release her 2005-07 operating and capital budgets on March 21. We believe the Senate will release their versions of the budget on March 28.

SESSION PRIORITIES

Transportation Solutions

ESHB 2157 would establish the Regional Transportation Improvement Authority (RTIA) that could be formed by King, Pierce and/or Snohomish counties or individually. Kitsap County could also form a RTIA or annex to an already formed version. Single county RTIA's would be the entire county. If more than one county then the urban growth boundaries shall be used. County council members and county executives will serve on the RTIA's. Voting authority will be prorated based on the population within the RTIA. Large cities would be represented on the RTIA but not allowed voting rights. The Puget Sound Regional Council will prepare a list of priority projects. The following revenue options would be available to the RTIA: \$100 vehicle license fee (VLF), 0.2% sales tax (revoted every 10 years), 0.6% motor vehicle excise tax (MVET), value pricing or high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Revenues will be used for highways, local roadways of regional significance, high capacity transportation, transit and transportation demand strategies. Priority will be given to structures at risk of failure. The county council places the project list and revenue plan on the ballot for approval of the voters. This bill passed the House by a vote of 77-19. It will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on March 24.

SB 6089 was introduced on March 16 and referred to the Senate Transportation Committee. This bill would modify the existing Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) including the following: requires a 2005 general election on projects and revenue, RTID tolling could be used for operations and maintenance, adds 0.2% MVET, at least 0.3% MVET must be used and all revenue inside the Sound Transit boundary would be used for high capacity transportation, prohibits the Monorail from issuing bonds unless the RTID is adopted and creates a new 5-member governance commission.

SB 6012 would make transportation an authorized use for parking and business improvement areas. The bill was passed by the Senate and referred to the House Transportation Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

State Funding

SHB 1903 creates the Job Development Fund. This legislation would provide a new grant mechanism for infrastructure to stimulate community and economic development. In the 2005-07 biennium \$25 million would be appropriated for this program. Beginning in the 2007-09 biennium up to \$50 million would be made available. The Community Economic Revitalization Board will administer 70% of the

funds after approval of the legislature. The additional 30% would be made available for grants for important projects that might not meet the legislative timelines. This bill passed the House by a vote of 54-41 and was referred to the Senate International Trade & Economic Development Committee. **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 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. This bill is did not pass off the House floor however discussion among the interested parties will continue. **Seattle supports the intent of this bill. However, we are opposed to any effort to single out Seattle for more restrictive uses than the other cities or counties.**

Session Objectives

Civil Rights

SHB 1515 which adds sexual orientation to the state discrimination laws is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee on March 22. We continue to work with other advocates for this bill. **Seattle supports this measure.**

HB 1586 and **SSB 5575** which would permit 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 did not pass out of either chamber. **Seattle supported these measures.**

Clean Cars

ESHB 1397 which would adopt the California vehicle emission standards for Washington State passed the House by a vote of 53-42. This bill will now goes to the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Clean Indoor Air

HB 2038 would prohibit smoking in any public location and removes the local preemption on smoking issues. This bill did not pass out of the House Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Consumer Protection

SSB 5692 which would regulate tax refund anticipation loans (RAL's) will be heard on March 22 in the House Financial Institutions & Insurance Committee. This bill would require the loan facilitator to disclose information including the loan schedule, information relating to electronic filing of the applicant's income tax return, the facilitator must not engage in dishonest, fraudulent or unfair business practices and applies the state's consumer protection act. **ESHB 1251** would require all participants providing RAL's to register with the Dept. of Financial Institutions and provide a \$250 fee. This bill would also require the loan facilitator to disclose information including the loan schedule, information relating to electronic filing of the applicant's income tax return, the facilitator must not engage in dishonest, fraudulent or unfair business practices and applies the state's consumer protection act. Violators may be fined up to \$500 per offense. Both bills still preempt local ordinances.

Firearm Safety

SHB 1687 which would restrict persons found not guilty by reason of insanity from possessing firearms will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 24. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Weights & Measures

SB 5401 allowing cities to impose local fees to pay for a weight & measures program did not pass out of the Senate Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

POLICY ISSUES

Education

SJR 8202 is a constitutional amendment to allow school levies to be approved by a simple majority of the voters. This legislation failed in the Senate by a vote of 25-23. A two-thirds majority from both chambers is necessary to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot. **SB 5144** would allow a simple majority of the voters to authorize school levies and bonds. This bill did not come up for the vote in the Senate. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Energy

ESSB 5098 and **ESHB 1062** which would establish efficiency standards for certain appliances and other products passed out of both chambers. There was a last minute attempt to exempt commercial washers from this bill but that effort failed. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Growth Management & Land Use

ESHB 2171 which allows cities and counties a one year extension to complete their critical areas ordinance passed out of the House by a vote of 90-4. This bill will be heard in the Senate Government Operations Committee in March 21. **Seattle supports this measure.**

ESSB 5907 would allow cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to not have minimum densities in accommodating growth. We had concerns about the proposed version and during floor deliberations an amendment was adopted which potentially raises new concerns. We are reviewing the engrossed bill and it now moves to the House Local Government Committee for consideration.

Human Services

ESSB 2163 establishing a homeless program passed the House by a vote of 51-45. This bill would provide some funding (through additional recording fees) to support the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The bill has been referred to the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

SSB 5767 which directs each county to create a task force to develop a ten-year plan addressing short-term and long-term housing for homeless persons passed out of the Senate by a vote of 34-14. This bill will be heard on March 22 in the House Housing Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Public Safety

ESSB 5060 would allow local jurisdictions to use automated traffic safety cameras at two-arterial intersections, railroad crossings, and school speed zones. This bill passed the Senate by a vote of 30-19 and was referred to the House Transportation Committee.

Solid Waste

ESB 5710 requiring the removal of mercury switches from cars before they are they are destroyed passed out the Senate by a vote of 35-13. **Seattle supports this measure.**

SHB 1488 and **SSB 5515** prohibiting the sale of products that contain polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) did not pass out of either chamber. **Seattle supported these measures.**

City of Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Relations – Olympia
David Foster, david.foster@seattle.gov
Rose Feliciano, rose.feliciano@seattle.gov