

CITY OF SEATTLE
2006 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 27, 2006

NUMBER 7

The policy committee cut-off was February 24. Fiscal and Transportation committee cut-off is February 27. The remainder of the session leading to the March 9 end date will be spent on the floor of the House and Senate.

The House passed their version of the 2006 operating budget (**SB 6386**) on February 24. The capital budget (**SB 6384**) is awaiting a vote on the House floor. The House transportation budget will be released on February 27. Below are a few of the highlights of the proposed operating budget.

The House budget fills at \$50.5 million a short fall in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) the program. However, unlike the Senate budget it does not provide the \$3.4 million needed to prevent the use of full-family sanctions proposed by Governor Gregoire.

The Immigrant Children's Health Program received \$4.4 million in both the House and Senate budgets. This will help fill some of the gap but the Children's Alliance estimates that 8,400 will remain on the waiting list. The goal is for all children to have health coverage by 2010.

The proposal adds \$18.2 million to cover prescription co-pays for over 100,000 low-income elderly people using Medicaid which is the same as the Senate. It also provides funding to add another 4,500 people to the Basic Health Plan which is 500 fewer than the Senate budget proposal.

Finally, both budgets increase funding to counties for mental health treatment by \$33 million.

Session Priorities

Transportation

SHB 2871 was passed by the House by a vote of 71-26. The Senate Transportation heard the bill on February 24 and will vote on a striking amendment on February 27. The bill as is currently written would prohibit a Sound Transit and/or Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) vote in 2006 or until the new regional governance commission approved the plan(s). It enacts all of the changes requested by the RTID Executive Board. It allows transit operations to be funded in the RTID plan. 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 is to develop an integrated regional transportation finance plan for submission to the voters, and to evaluate other regional transportation planning and coordination issues which includes a new governing entity. The Commission must issue a report by November 15, 2006 to allow enacting legislation to be approved and sent to a regional vote November, 2007. The City of Seattle would have the authority to enact the Monorail Authority's taxing options for local or high capacity transit if the region and city voters first gave their approval in the regional plan. Also, new to the bill is the inclusion of the Transportation Benefit District provision for the three county area without the

limit on the amount for local projects. This would provide the local options we have been looking for but requires a vote of the people.

SB 6566 and **HB 3089** which would revise the commute trip reduction program moved to the House and Senate Rules Committee. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Housing

ESHB 2984 which authorizes cities, towns, or counties to implement affordable housing incentive programs passed out of Senate Financial Institutions, Housing and Consumer Protection Committee and is in the Rules Committee. This bill gives local jurisdictions the option of encouraging or requiring a number of tools to increase the availability of affordable housing. We had some concerns on the bill of how it passed out of the House, but were able to work with the sponsor to come to agreement on language that works for a variety of interests. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

E2SHB 2418 increases the availability of affordable housing by providing additional funding for the Housing Trust Fund and Homeless Families Services Fund. The bill was heard Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 22. **Seattle supports this measure.** Thank you to the Councilmembers who were able to make calls in support of this bill.

Education

The House operating budget includes \$30.3 million for student remediation assistance. It also includes \$2.4 million for the UW to increase its life sciences research capacity.

SSB 6618 is the compromise bill relating to the WA Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test. This bill requires a study to explore options for students to demonstrate that they have met learning standards. It also requires a review and statistical analysis of those that do not meet the WASL standards to try to identify similar characteristics and possible barriers to meeting the standards. This bill is in the House Rules Committee. The companion bill **HB 2998** did not move out of the Senate Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education Committee before the cut-off.

SHB 2964 which would create a department of early learning department awaits a vote on the Ways & Means Committee. Funding for this effort was proposed in the House and Senate budget proposals. This is an early initiative of Governor Gregoire's Washington Learns task force. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Session Objectives

Capital Budget

The House Capital Budget provides \$1.5 million for the Seattle Aquarium. The Governor and Senate each proposed \$2 million in their budgets. Discovery Park did not receive new funding in any of the capital budget proposals.

Environmental Health

SSB 6428 provides no-cost options for individuals, small governments and small business to recycle their computers and televisions. The bill passed out of the House Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks Committee and was referred to the Appropriations Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

2ESHB 1488 prohibiting the sale of products that contain polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee. PBDEs are flame retardants. This bill would ban the use of PBDEs in products unless there is no alternative. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Human Services – TANF

2SSB 6628 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. 2SSB 6628 did not pass out of the Senate. However, it is called out in the Senate budget is likely to be considered to be “necessary to implement the budget.” There is no money in the House budget for the children’s safety net. **Seattle supports this legislation and budget proposal.**

Streamline Sales Tax

SSB 6594, conforming Washington's tax structure to the streamlined sales and use tax agreement, passed out of the House Finance Committee on February 23 and was sent to the Rules Committee. The bill includes full mitigation to cities that are adversely affected by the shift in the distribution of sales tax from a point of purchase system to point of delivery. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Weights and Measures Fees

SSB 6365 would increase the annual registration fees for weights and measuring devices. A striker is being written that would double the current fees but phase them in over two years. The bill is in the House Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Policy Issues

Air Quality and Climate Protection

SHB 2738 and **SSB 6508** which develop minimum renewable fuel content requirements and fuel quality standards in an alternative fuels market are in the Senate and House Rules Committees. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Domestic Violence

ESHB 2848 states that communication between a domestic violence victim and advocate cannot be shared unless permission is given by the victim or there is a clear risk of danger. This bill was passed out of Senate Judiciary Committee and has moved to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

SHB 2395 which would require DSHS to develop protocols related to and consider domestic violence when investigating child abuse or neglect issues. This bill did not pass out of the Senate Human Services & Corrections Committee before the cut-off. **Seattle supports this bill.**

SHB 2394 would require WorkFirst program participants to develop an individual responsibility plan (IRP). The purpose of the IRP is to map out a strategy for self-sufficiency. This would require participants to include a financial literacy component to their plans. This bill passed out of the Senate Human Services & Corrections Committee and moved to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Economic Development

SB 6558 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 is scheduled for executive session in the House Finance Committee on February 27. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Elections and General Government

SB 6221 which would provide cities and counties the option of implementing a program, after a public vote, allowing publicly financed campaigns for local offices passed out of the House State Government Committee.

Energy

3ESHB 2939 the energy freedom program passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee and was referred to the Ways & Means Committee. This bill sets up a 13-member board which will allocate \$25 million for loans to be used for research and development of new and renewable and bio-fuel sources. This could allow for the local production of bio-fuels and renewables. **Seattle supports this measure.**

ESHB 1010 which requires utilities to develop integrated resource plans (IRP) passed out of the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee and moves to the Rules Committee. We are currently verifying what came out of committee.

Growth Management, Land Use and Annexation

SHB 2325 which encourages the development of affordable housing did not pass out of the Senate Government Operations & Elections before the cut-off. This purpose of this bill has to do with requiring how jurisdictions deal with "odd shaped lots." This bill is very prescriptive and basically overrides our zoning codes. **Seattle opposed this legislation.**

Human Services

SHB 2002 will allow up to 50 foster care youth to continue receiving benefits up to age twenty-one if they stay in school. There is money in the budget to accommodate the added youth continuing in foster care. **Seattle supports this legislation.** 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 Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee and was referred to the Ways & Means Committee. This bill simply codifies current departmental practices. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

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. The Senate Way & Means Committee heard SB 6849 on February 23.

Public Safety

HB 3205 clarifies the authority to apprehend conditionally released persons. An example of the 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 1st & 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 passed out of the Senate Human Services & Corrections Committee and moved to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

ESHB 1849 did not pass out of the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee before the cut-off. The original purpose of this bill was to ensure better and more consistent training is provided for private security guards. The bill now directs the Department of Licensing to study the post assignment of training of security guards. **Seattle supported this bill.**

ESSB 6106 requiring disclosure of specified health care information for law enforcement purposes passed out of House Health Care Committee and was referred to the Rules Committee. This bill is a result of some problems homicide detectives have encountered. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Revenue

SSB 5333 passed out of the House Finance Committee and is now in the Rules Committee. This bill would allow all taxing districts to ask voters to approve a lid lift for up to six years and removes the non-supplanting language from the existing statute. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Water Stewardship

SHB 2884 concerning the use of reclaimed water is awaiting a vote on the House floor. The purpose is to update rules which were last updated in 1997. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

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