

CITY OF SEATTLE
2009 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

February 23, 2009

Number 6

Thank you to the Mayor and Councilmembers for joining your colleagues from around the state for the Association of Washington Cities annual legislative conference in Olympia this past week. Your direct contact with legislators on a variety of issues is much appreciated.

The state released a preliminary state revenue forecast on Thursday which showed an increase in the existing deficit bringing the total to over \$8.3 billion. The official forecast does not come out until mid-March with the budget proposals coming out shortly after the forecast. Leadership in both chambers is now beginning to talk about the need for a voter approved tax package along with additional cuts to help fill deficit.

Wednesday, February 25 is the cut-off to vote bills out of the policy committees. Monday, March 2 is the cut-off for the fiscal and transportation committees.

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2009

Housing Resources

HB 1464 passed out of the House Local Government & Housing Committee on February 13 and is now in the Rules Committee. HB 1464 makes modification to the incentive zoning for affordable housing statute. The Senate version, **SSB 5544**, passed out of the Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance Committee on February 18 with a technical amendment. **Seattle supports these bills.**

SHB 1696 was referred to the Finance Committee on February 17 with an amendment. It provides an incentive to employers to provide housing assistance to employees. The Senate version, **SB 5585**, was heard in the Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance Committee on February 18. **Seattle supports these bills.**

HB 1973 passed out of the House Local Government & Housing Committee on February 18. SB 5856 is scheduled for a hearing in the Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance Committee on February 25. HB 1973 and SB 5856 create a financing tool for affordable housing. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Regional Transportation

SSB 5768, regarding the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement, passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee with a unanimous vote. The bill now goes to the Rules Committee.

HB 1978 is the vehicle for the federal economic stimulus funds in the area of transportation. This bill will be heard in the House Transportation Committee on February 24. We anticipate seeing the proposed funding from the Governor the morning of the 24. Funding for Mercer Street and Spokane Street has been requested.

SB 6064 would allow transportation accountability regions and regional transportation accountability boards to plan, finance, construct and operate regional transportation projects, which essentially means any state or local road or transit project. A plan will be placed before the voters along with the necessary financing – taxes, tolls, user fees, etc. A nine-person voter approved board would be established. All state and local taxes on the transportation projects would be exempt. This bill will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 25.

HB 2211, relating to authorization, administration, collection, and enforcement of tolls on the state route number 520 corridor, was heard in the House Transportation Committee last week.

HB 1947, allowing a local option street utility, was heard in the House Transportation Committee last week.

STATEMENT OF POLICY – 2009

Civil Rights

HB 1517 / SB 5534 would restore the right to vote to persons convicted of a felony in a Washington State Court when he or she ceases to be in the custody of the Department of Corrections. It restores the right to vote to persons convicted of a felony in a federal court or any state court other than a Washington state court as long as he or she is no longer incarcerated. **Seattle has signed in in support of this legislation.** It was passed out of the House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs last week, and it is eligible for Senate floor action in the opposite chamber.

Climate Protection & Environment

HB 1819 and **SB 5735**, by request of Governor Gregoire, would take steps to implement a regional cap-and-trade program in line with the Western Climate Initiative. **Seattle testified in support of the original legislation.** The House bill is presently scheduled to be heard in the House Committee on General Government this week.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

SHB 1469 passed out of the House Committee on Environmental Health on February 19. SHB 1469 would establish the product stewardship recycling act for mercury-containing lights. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Infrastructure/Finance

HB 2249 is a bill that only affects King County (KC) and the cities in King County that have proposed annexation areas. This bill would extend the existing sales tax credit for annexations over 10,000 to January 1, 2012. The bill penalizes cities that do not annex

an urban growth area of 4,000 people or more by 2012 by shifting 0.075% of existing sales tax authority to KC. It allows KC to impose a utility tax in the unincorporated areas. It would allow KC and cities to impose a sales tax increase of up to 0.3% for the years of 2010 – 2012. Finally, it requires a performance audit of KC, specifically looking at overhead costs, service and streamlining improvements and local and regional services provide inside and outside of cities. This bill will be heard on February 24 in the House Finance Committee.

HB 2252 allows for funding of arts and heritage projects, regional centers, human services, low-income housing, and community development in King County. The funding sources are from sales and use taxes on car rentals, restaurants, and lodging. This bill will be heard on February 24 in the House Finance Committee.

HB 1710 was heard in the House Finance Committee on February 17. This bill is the legislative fix to the North Highline annexation area that was originally agreed to in December 2008.

Law & Criminal Justice

SB 5838 would allow local jurisdictions to classify as a criminal offense committing a traffic infraction, where the conduct is a proximate cause of death, great bodily harm, or substantial bodily harm to another while operating or controlling a motor vehicle. We understand that it may be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 24. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Parks

HB 2124 and **SB 5967** relate to gender equity in parks facilities. The bills address jurisdictions and non-discrimination based on sex in the operation, conduct, or administration of community athletics programs for youth or adults. A new draft has been released this weekend, and Seattle is reviewing its greatly revised content. SB 5967 will be heard on February 23.

Planning & Development

SHB 1490 passed out of the House Local Government & Housing Committee on February 19. The Senate version, **SSB 5687**, passed out of the Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee on February 19. The City of Seattle testified in support of the legislation's goals and with concerns about specific language. SHB 1490 and SSB 5687 would reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use and transportation requirements. **Seattle is monitoring these bills.**

HB 1775 and **SB 5686** would give the region the authority to re-regulate limousines. and have both been heard in the respective Transportation Committees. We are in negotiations with several stakeholders and agencies and expect that the House bill will be moved out of committee on February 24. **Seattle supports this legislation.**