

CITY OF SEATTLE
2009 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Number 1

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2009

The 2009 Washington State Legislature began its 105-day session on Monday, January 12. It is scheduled to end on Sunday, April 26. The focus of this session is the budget deficit and efforts to stimulate the economy. A supplemental budget is being prepared for the end of the 2007-09 budget, which is carrying a deficit of over \$500 million. The projected deficit for the 2009-11 biennium is approximately \$5.5 billion. The next revenue forecast is due in March.

The Governor has proposed an economic recovery plan that includes accelerating almost \$1 billion of infrastructure funding across the state.

Although much of the first week was focused on the Governor's proposed budget, the committees also began to hear policy bills. The first policy bill cut-off is Wednesday, February 25.

Public Safety

Advocates of 2008's legislation, concerning provisions governing firearms possession by persons involuntarily committed, worked toward introduction of a very similar piece of legislation for the 2009 session. The bill will be introduced and assigned a bill number in the next day or so.

HB 1039 was heard in the House Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee on January 13. HB 1039 would establish a statewide Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) emergency response program. **Seattle is monitoring this legislation.**

Housing Resources

The following City of Seattle priority housing policy bills are garnering support and will soon be introduced: Modifications to the Incentive Zoning for Affordable Housing Statute, which clarifies authority and provides flexibility for these programs; the Housing Everyone Finance Tool, which creates an affordable housing growth fund; and the Employer Assisted Housing bill, which creates an incentive for employers to assist workers by providing down payment assistance for home purchases, or one-time financial assistance for moving to better-located rental housing.

Regional Transportation

Both the House and Senate Transportation Committees met this week, largely to focus on the status of the transportation budget and delivery of already-approved projects and programs.

STATEMENT OF POLICY – 2009

Energy

HB 1133 will be heard in the House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee. **HB 1133** would make modifications to the energy independence act, created by the passage of I-937. **Seattle is monitoring this legislation.**

Hazardous and Solid Waste

HB 1165 will be heard in the House Environmental Health Committee on January 21. **HB 1165** provides for the safe collection and disposal of unwanted drugs from residential sources through a producer-provided and funded product stewardship program. **Seattle supports this bill.**

Human Services

The House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee met on January 13 to hear public testimony on health and human services items in the Governor's proposed 2009-11 budget. **The City of Seattle testified with concerns** about the proposed cuts and reductions to human services programs and funding.

Infrastructure/Finance

HB 1048 and SB 5047 would repeal RCW 35.87, which requires sale of municipal property in commercial zones to first be put out to bid for use as free parking. The House Local Government & Housing Committee unanimously passed the bill out of committee. The Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee will be heard on January 19. **Seattle supports these bills.**

Parks

HB 1069 would enact new requirements for exterior and outdoor lighting fixtures and policies, including residential developments, parks and recreational fields, and advertising signs. **Seattle testified to strong concerns** about the potential impacts on Seattle Parks and Recreation before the House Local Government Committee.

Seattle Parks and City Attorney's staff, along with City lobbyists, met this week with advocates for a bill relating to gender equity in parks facilities. The legislation is similar to a bill from the 2008 session, and we are working together to arrive at a compromise.

Planning & Development

The City of Seattle, in partnership with a host of stakeholders, finalized new legislation that would give the region the authority to bring town cars and executive sedans into regulatory parity with taxicabs. The bill will be introduced and assigned a bill number in the next day or so.