

CITY OF SEATTLE
2010 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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SESSION PRIORITIES – 2010

Budget Safety Net: Do No Harm

The Governor announced she will assume \$435 million in Federal Medical Assistance Program funds for the 2010 supplemental budget. However, it is less clear whether the House and Senate feel as certain as the Governor that the funds will come through before session ends. The caseload forecast comes out on February 10 and the revenue forecast on the 12th. Caseloads are expected to be slightly higher and revenue may be flat or slightly lower due to the Supreme Court's denial of the Department of Revenue's motion for reconsideration on the Dot Foods case, which will have a \$150 million negative impact on the revenue forecast. (There are numerous bills to negate the effect of the Court's decision).

Education

HB 2731 was heard in the House Ways & Means Committee on January 25. HB 2731 will implement a program of early learning for educationally at-risk children within the overall program of basic education under Article IX of the state Constitution. The bill specifies preschool for educationally at risk 3 and 4 year olds. Seattle supports this legislation.

SB 6696 passed out of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee on February 3 and is scheduled for a hearing in Ways & Means on February 8. SB 6696 is the Senate's 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. Seattle is currently evaluating this legislation.

SB 6759 passed out of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee on February 4 and is scheduled for a hearing in Ways & Means on February 8. SB 6759 asserts that a voluntary program of early learning should be included in basic education. The Legislature intends to begin the program by creating a working group to identify and recommend a plan for implementation. Seattle supports this legislation.

Public Safety

HB 2780 was heard in the House Transportation Committee. HB 2780 would heavily restrict the use of automated safety cameras and limit fines generated by automated safety cameras to \$25. In Seattle, automated safety cameras have resulted in reduced red light running, fewer persons injured at controlled intersections, and reduced vehicle

speeds in school zones. Councilmember Licata testified in opposition to this bill on behalf of the City. The bill is tentatively scheduled for to come up for a vote in the House Transportation Committee on Monday February 8.

SB 5838, the vulnerable roadway user bill, passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

HB 1679 passed out of the House of Representatives by a vote of 96-0. HB 1679, also known as the Jason McKissack Act, reimburses members of LEOFF Plan 2 who are totally disabled in the line of duty for medical payments made for employer-provided benefits. Deputy Chief Paul McDonagh from the Seattle Police Department testified in support of the bill on behalf of the City.

Revenue/Fiscal

SB 6164 and **SB 6424**, the Senate versions of the local fiscal flexibility bills had public hearings in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. We expect one of them to pass out of Committee by cutoff on Tuesday, but it's not yet clear what will be in the bill that emerges.

HB 3179 is a new local fiscal flexibility bill in the House. It is scheduled for a public hearing on Tuesday February 9 and is tentatively scheduled to come up for executive session the same day. HB 3179 includes the provisions most beneficial to Seattle including the .3 for public safety councilmanically, harmonizing the first and second quarter of REET, and a fix for brokered natural gas.

SB 6843 suspends the 2/3 vote requirement of the Legislature for tax increases. SB 6843 had a lively public hearing in Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB 3176 increases state revenues by closing certain tax loopholes, ending certain tax preferences, and extending the B&O tax to out of state businesses that operate in Washington.

Transportation

HB 1775, the bill that would allow the City to regulate limousines, passed out of the House Transportation Committee and is now in the Rules Committee.

HB 2855 had a public hearing in the House Transportation Committee. HB 2855 temporarily authorizes transit agencies to raise revenue by imposing a \$20 annual vehicle license fee by a vote of the governing body without first forming a Transportation Benefit District (TBD). While this could provide much needed revenue for transit, it could also limit Seattle's ability to raise revenue through a TBD.

SB 6570, which would allow certain private transportation providers to use designated transit only lanes, passed out the Senate Transportation Committee and is now in Rules. The bill, although improved from the original version, is still problematic. The City is concerned that this legislation would be virtually impossible to enforce.

SB 6366 passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee and is now in Rules. The City opposes this bill because it would give WSDOT total control over local permitting and appeals related to major transportation projects.

Water Stewardship

HB 3181 and **SB 6851** have been introduced in the House & Senate, respectively. These bills would increase the Hazardous Substance Tax created by initiative in 1998 and raise approximately \$250M a year. Twenty percent of the money would go to local stormwater projects this year and 70 percent would go into the general fund for the upcoming biennium. The legislation proposes to, over time, reduce the percentage of money going to the general fund and increase the percentage to stormwater management until one hundred percent of the funds are dedicated to stormwater. Seattle supports this legislation.

ONGOING PRIORITIES – 2010

Race & Social Justice

SHB 1666 passed out of the Community & Economic Development Committee on February 1 and is scheduled for a hearing in the Finance Committee on February 11. SHB 1666 would authorize counties above a specified population threshold to create cultural access authorities with the authority to impose a voter-approved sales and use tax of up to 0.1 percent to fund cultural access projects. Seattle supports this legislation.

Economic Development

HB 2912 is scheduled for executive session in the House Finance Committee on February 9. The Senate version, **SB 6661** was heard in the Senate Economic Development, Trade & Innovation Committee on January 28. HB 2912/SB 6661 allows Seattle to retain restaurant tax revenue collected within the city limits for Seattle Center. Seattle supports this legislation.

HB 2983 passed out of the Community, Economic Development & Trade Committee on February 1 and was referred to the Finance Committee. HB 2983 creates a funding mechanism and a grant program to promote global health innovation. Seattle supports this legislation.

Energy

SSB 6656 was amended in executive session in the Environment, Water & Energy Committee and passed out on February 4. The original bill would authorize municipalities to establish conservation utilities to finance residential energy efficiencies. The amendments: limit the authorization to a pilot project for municipalities in Puget Sound Energy's territory until 2015; require a municipal election before these services could be set up; and limit the superior lien position behind existing loans. Additionally, the cost recovery language was removed. The Housing companion, **HB 2853**, did not pass out of its policy committee prior to the policy cutoff and is considered "dead" for the session. Seattle is currently evaluating the amendments to SB 6656.

HB 2925 was heard in the Ways & Means Committee on February 6 and is scheduled for executive session on February 8. The Senate version, **SB 6480**, was last heard in the Government Operations & Elections Committee on January 25. These bills affect Seattle City Light's impact fee agreement with Pend Oreille County regarding City Light's hydroelectric generation facility in the County. Seattle testified in opposition to this legislation.

HB 2561 passed the House on January 20 and was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. HB 2561 would authorize the issuance of \$861 million in general obligation bonds for capital improvements that lead to energy-related cost savings in public schools, state colleges and universities, and other public facilities. Seattle supports this legislation.

SSB 6672 was amended and passed out of the Environment, Water & Energy Committee on February 5. The House version, HB 3034, did not pass out of its policy committee by the cutoff and is considered "dead" for the session. SB 6672 would make modifications to I-937, the Energy Independence Act. Seattle is currently evaluating the amendments to this legislation.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

SSB 5279 was amended and passed out of the Health & Long Term Care Committee on January 29 and is scheduled in Ways & Means on February 8. SSB 5279 would provide for the safe collection and disposal of unwanted drugs from residential sources through a producer-provided and funded product stewardship program. Seattle supports this legislation.

HB 2914 passed out of the Environmental Health Committee on February 2 and is scheduled for hearing in Ways & Means on February 6. HB 2914 would establish a product stewardship recycling act for mercury-containing lights and ban the sale of bulk mercury. Seattle supports this legislation.

Housing & Homelessness

SB 6817 passed out of the Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance Committee on February 5 and was referred to Ways & Means. The House version, **HB 2906**, did not pass out of its policy committee by cutoff and is considered "dead" for the session. However, a new version of the House bill, **HB 3177**, has been introduced and is scheduled for a hearing in the Capital Budget Committee on February 8. SB 6817/HB3177 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.

HB 2623 passed out of the Judiciary Committee on February 3 and executive action was taken on this bill on February 5 in General Government Appropriations. HB 2623

would provide a one-year forbearance on foreclosure for a borrower who is receiving unemployment benefits. Seattle supports this legislation.

HB 2905 passed out of the Local Government & Housing Committee on February 1 and was referred to Ways & Means. HB 2905 is a planning bill to address the issue of requiring a discharge plan (including housing) prior to releasing people from institutions, whether they are in residential treatment, mental health hospitals, or criminal justice facilities. Seattle supports this legislation.

Law & Criminal Justice

HJR 4220 passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 80-17. This proposed constitutional amendment would give judges discretion to deny bail to a person charged with a crime if the pretrial detention of the person will reasonably assure public safety.

Planning & Development

SB 6459 passed out of the Senate Financial Institutions, Insurance & Housing Committee on February 5 and was referred to Ways & Means. SB 6459 establishes limitations on local government's authority to conduct mandatory rental inspection programs and provides local governments the authority to conduct civil administrative search warrant authority. Seattle opposes this legislation.

Public Health

HB 2388 was heard in the House Finance Committee on January 22. HB 2388 would provide funding of public health activities by imposing sales and use taxes on sales of candy to be deposited in a new public health improvement account. A minimum of \$100,000 would be distributed to each qualifying local health jurisdiction and the remaining funds in the account will be distributed to each qualifying local health jurisdiction on a per capita basis. Seattle supports this legislation.

Sustainable Farming and Healthy Food

SB 6343 passed out of the Agriculture & Rural Economic Development Committee on February 3 and was referred to Rules. SB 6343 would establish a Washington State Food Policy Council to advance the following six food system goals: support local food; increase healthy food in schools; reduce hunger; develop health and nutrition programs; and protect resources needed for sustained local food production. Seattle supports this legislation.