

CITY OF SEATTLE
2010 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

March 29, 2010

Number 11

We are now halfway through the 1st special session. While the House and Senate have reportedly reached agreement on the size of a revenue package (about \$800 million), they continue to disagree how to raise the money. The Senate continues to include a temporary .2 sales tax increase in their package, which the House continues to oppose. Meanwhile, Governor Gregoire continues signing bills into law.

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2010

Budget Safety Net: Do No Harm

ESSB 6444, the supplemental operating budget, passed the Senate again by a 25-19 vote on March 15th. The bill is now in the House, eligible to come to a vote. Negotiations between the House and Senate continue.

2ESSB 6143, the revenue package, passed the House 53-42 on March 20th. The Senate refused to concur in the House amendments on March 25th, requested a conference committee with the House, and appointed Senators Prentice, Murray and Zarelli to the conference.

SHB 3177 concerns funds for affordable housing and is currently eligible to come to vote by the House of Representatives. SHB 3177 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. The House and Senate are currently negotiating the level of funding for the Housing Trust Fund in the capital budget.

2SHB 2782, the Security Lifeline Act, makes modifications to GA-U. The House and Senate reached a compromise. The bill passed the Senate on March 22nd by a 28-16 vote and the House concurred in the Senate amendments the same day by a vote of 57-40. Seattle **supports** the compromise, which includes faster screening and transition to SSI, require chemical dependency treatment if necessary (House budget includes funding for this); and places a 24 month time limit during a 5 year period, although clients may not be terminated until an SSI assessment has been completed. While the time limits mean a considerable number of clients will lose benefits, it appears to be the best outcome possible given current budget constraints. The Mayor and six Councilmember's sent a letter to Governor Gregoire asking her to sign the legislation. Gov. Gregoire is scheduled to take action on the bill on Monday, March 29th.

Education

SHB 2893 modifies school levy provisions. Gov. Gregoire is scheduled to take action on the bill on Monday, March 29th. The bill restores the school levy base and raises the levy lid by 4 percent for all school districts through 2017. This measure could provide up to \$21.2 million for Seattle Public School students. Without asking voters for a modification to the recently passed operational levy, \$7.3 million would be made available in 2011. An additional \$13.9 million would be available if voters approved. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

2SHB 2731 relates to early learning for at risk children. The Governor is scheduled to take action on the bill on Monday, March 29th. The bill says that the Legislature intends to create an entitlement program for early learning, maintain the number of early learning slots in the 2011-13 biennia, and phases in funding over the next several biennia until the program is fully funded. **SSB 6759** also relates to early learning and is scheduled for action by the Governor on March 29th. It creates a work group to examine the opportunities and barriers to developing a comprehensive plan for a voluntary program of early learning. The work group will examine the opportunities and barriers to adding early learning to basic education and to creating a program of early learning as a protected entitlement.

E2SSB 6696 is the 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. Governor Gregoire is scheduled to take action on March 29th.

Public Safety

EHB 1679, the Jason McKissack Act, would reimburse medical expenses for certain disabled public safety personnel. It has been delivered to the Governor and awaits her signature. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

Transportation

ESSB 6392 relates to the use of toll revenue in the SR 520 corridor. The final version of the bill allows bond proceeds from toll revenue to be used to begin construction including \$200 million for the Westside. It also creates several workgroups that will examine transit connections on the Westside, refinements to the design on the Westside, and high capacity transit planning and integrated funding. It has been delivered to the Governor and awaits her signature.

Transportation budget proviso: A budget proviso in section 221 of the supplemental transportation (**ESSB 6381**) budget ties public transportation grant funding administered by WSDOT to requirements that local governments provide private transportation providers use of high occupancy vehicle lanes, transit only lanes, and park and ride

facilities. Seattle **opposed** this proviso and is seeking a veto. The bill has been delivered to the Governor and awaits her action.

Water Stewardship

HB 3181 and **SB 6851** would provide state funding for local stormwater clean up, primarily through a competitive grant program. It would increase the Hazardous Substance Tax – the existing funding source for the state and local toxics accounts (MTCA). Although neither bill passed in its respective chamber during the regular session, the proposal is on the list for consideration for the special session; it is both a generator of revenue and will lead to the creation of jobs when implemented. However, the outcome of a vote in either chamber is still uncertain.

A striking amendment to **HB 3181** has been crafted by legislative proponents. It includes a .85 % increase (about \$100 million a year). A number of additional amendments are being discussed, some which would provide tax credits in certain circumstances and others which would place more requirements on local governments in order to receive the funding. **SB 6851** currently includes a .5% increase – 85% to a new storm water account for local storm water clean-up and 15% to the motor vehicle account for WSDOT storm water projects. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

ONGOING PRIORITIES

Race and Social Justice/Civil Rights

E2SHB 3026 relates to school district compliance with state and federal civil rights laws and was prime sponsored by Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos. The bill was delivered to the Governor and awaits her signature. The bill represents one of the recommendations made by the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. It prohibits discrimination in Washington public schools on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability. It directs OSPI to develop rules and guidelines to eliminate such discrimination, and allows private court actions to be brought for violations of the law and rules that are developed. Seattle **supports** this legislation.

Economic Development

SSB 6889 concerns the governance and financing of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. It passed the Senate 39-1 (9 excused) on March 20th. The House then amended the bill and passed it on March 22nd by a vote of 91-6. SSB 6889 allows an additional public facility district (PFD) to be created in King County for the purpose of acquiring and operating the Center once it is transferred from the public nonprofit that currently operates it. The new PFD would be governed by a nine person board, three of

them appointed by the city of Seattle, three by King County, and three by the Governor. The PFD may impose a 2 percent lodging tax in Seattle that credits against the state sales tax rate. This bill is part of a settlement of a lawsuit against the state brought by Seattle hotels. Proponents of the bill testified that it will put the Center in a good position for future expansion. The House amendments change some of the provisions related to fund transfers between the convention center account and the proposed new PFD.

Energy

ESHB 2925 affects Seattle City Light's impact fee agreement with Pend Oreille County regarding City Light's hydroelectric generation facility. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on Friday, March 24th. The Governor vetoed the emergency clause, which has the effect of delaying the effective date for several months. Seattle **supported** this legislation as a reasonable compromise with Pend Oreille County.

Sustainable Farming and Healthy Food

SSB 6343 would establish the Washington Food Policy Forum. It was delivered to the Governor and awaits her signature. SSB 6343 would establish a Washington Food Policy Forum to advance the following six food system goals: support local food; increase healthy food in schools; reduce hunger; develop health & nutrition programs; and protect resources needed for sustained local food production. Seattle **supports** this legislation. Council President Conlin sent a letter of support to Governor Gregoire.

Water Stewardship

E2SSB 6267 relates to water rights processing. It was delivered to the Governor and awaits her signature. The bill authorizes an alternative cost-reimbursement process for water rights applications as well as an expedited processing procedure for water rights applications. It creates a Water Rights Processing Account to support processing of water rights applications. The bill was amended on the House floor, which would have prohibited DOE from requiring meters on exempt wells. However, when the bill returned to the Senate, the House amendment was ruled beyond the scope and object of the bill and was removed. Both chambers passed the underlying bill, which was sent to the Governor.

The **Senate budget** contains a **proviso** requiring the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to do an environmental impact statement before declaring the Cedar River Watershed (game management unit 490) open for deer and elk hunting. The City of Seattle/Seattle Public Utilities strongly **supports** this language. We are asking our legislators to help assure that the proviso is in final budget bill passed by the legislature.