



## CITY OF SEATTLE 2011 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

January 17, 2011

Number 1

This is the first bulletin of the 2011 legislative session, and next week we will be rolling out a reformatted bulletin that emphasizes the City's primary areas of focus (in keeping with the reformatted legislative agenda) and takes advantage of new online legislative tools. For that reason, and because the legislature focused primarily on committee work sessions and the state budget this week, we have omitted discussion of specific bills from this week's bulletin. Next week's bulletin will provide a more detailed update on the issues and bills relevant to the City's agenda. We hope that you will find the new format informative and easy to use, and we welcome your feedback.

### ***Overview of Week One***

The first week of the legislative session focused on the state budget, though some committees held work sessions and informal briefings on other topics. The Legislature faces a \$400 million budget deficit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, and must quickly pass a supplemental budget fixing as much as possible of this deficit.

On Tuesday, the House Ways & Means Committee held a public hearing on the Governor's proposed supplemental budget. **Deputy Chief Nick Metz** testified at the hearing and drew the connection between the human services safety net and public safety. He also testified in support of full funding for the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative.

We expect the House's proposed supplemental budget to be introduced early this week and to move through the Ways & Means Committee this week.

After the legislature addresses the budget deficit for this year, it will need to resolve a \$4.6 billion deficit in the 2011-2013 state operating budget. The state has few options other than to make deep, painful cuts to programs and services it currently provides. As a result, the state budget process will be very difficult and will dominate much of the 2011 session.

On other matters, **Seattle City Light** participated in a joint Senate Environment, Water & Energy and House Technology, Energy & Communications hearing. The Senate and House were providing a broad overview of electric utility issues for the new and returning legislators.

Looking ahead, next week will again focus on the supplemental budget, which is very important because the cuts the Legislature makes now will lay the groundwork for the 2011-2013 budget. The Governor's proposed supplemental budget eliminates Disability Lifeline, the Basic Health Plan, the State Food Assistance Program, and more, and makes significant cuts to other important programs like Maternity Support Services and community health clinics. The supplemental budget process is key to saving Disability Lifeline and these other programs, because if they are eliminated in the supplemental, it will be very difficult to revive them in the biennial budget. The best we can realistically hope for is to help shape the cuts to minimize the impacts on the most vulnerable, and also to ask the State to give us flexibility to adapt.