



CITY OF SEATTLE 2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Number 4

Week Overview

In the fourth week, the legislature hit the first of this session's bill cut-off dates and finalized the calendar for the remainder of the session. Committee meetings were packed with public hearings and executive session votes. Late on Wednesday night, the full Senate took an historic vote on marriage equality and moved the bill to the House. Policy bill cut-off was Friday, and fiscal committee cut-off is this coming Tuesday, so there is only a very short window for bills to be heard and passed out of the fiscal committees. Legislators, staff, and lobbyists worked over the weekend to prepare for Tuesday's cut-off.

Areas of Primary Focus

Protecting the most vulnerable

Human Trafficking: The legislature introduced a package of bills to address the problem of human sex trafficking in our state, including [SB 6251](#) to criminalize the advertising of minors as a class C felony, which is prime sponsored by Senator Kohl-Welles. **Seattle supports this legislation** and we look forward to working with legislators to craft as strong of a bill as possible. The bill passed out of the Judiciary Committee and is now in Rules, waiting to become eligible to come to the floor for a vote. Legislators, staff, lobbyists, and others continue to perfect the language.

Education

K-12 Reform: The variety of legislation that proposed to make changes in the way that teachers and principals are evaluated did not pass the policy committee cut off. However, the McCleary court decision and a strong push for reform will make it likely that the conversation on how to improve our school system for all students will continue.

Economic development

Transportation Package: Support for Governor Gregoire's proposal for a \$3.8 billion transportation package has waned, in large part due to the \$1.50 barrel fee. Transportation leaders are now considering a smaller fee proposal to raise revenue for the state, and they are developing a package of transportation funding options for local governments. The Senate Transportation Committee held a public hearing on [SB 6582](#), which provides a number of local options, including a city gas tax option. As presently drafted, this could generate approximately \$12 million a year for the City. Seattle is working with other cities, counties, legislators, and advocates to develop an effective set of tools that will help us address our current and future needs in the City and region.

Jobs Now Package: The House and Senate released draft proposals to create jobs by investing in infrastructure. The proposal would bond against certain dedicated revenue streams and use the bond revenue to invest in a broad range of infrastructure projects such as toxic waste site clean-up, affordable housing, school construction, and energy efficiency.

Public safety

Medical Marijuana: The Senate Health Care Committee moved [SB 6265](#) (Addressing the medical use of cannabis) out of committee, and it has been referred to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation** because it provides additional clarity and regulatory authority for local jurisdictions, while preserving access for patients. Seattle continues to work with Sen. Kohl-Welles, cities and other stakeholders to craft mutually agreeable language regarding the extent of local governments' regulatory authorities.

DWLS3: [SB 6284](#) reforms Washington's approach to certain traffic infractions. A compromise bill, **which Seattle supports**, passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee. The House version ([HB 2680](#)) had a hearing in the House Transportation Committee on Tuesday, January 31st, but it is unlikely to move forward in the process.

City fiscal health

Local Revenue Authority: At the request of Governor Gregoire, legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate that would have the state take over the administration of local B&O taxes ([SB 6176](#) and [HB 2490](#)). There are still no hearings scheduled for these bills. **Seattle opposes this legislation because it would result in an estimated loss of \$23-43 million a year in City revenue**, necessitating additional cuts to the City's budget. In the House, Rep. Reuven Carlyle prime sponsored the legislation in order to be able to be in a better position to ensure an outcome that is revenue neutral to Seattle and other cities. Seattle is working with the other major B&O cities on a common portal that will simplify tax filing for businesses.

Additionally, [SB 6574](#) allows the City to continue to collect an admissions tax for Husky football games while the Huskies are temporarily relocated to Century Link for this season. **Seattle supports this bill** because without it, we would lose up to \$900,000 in revenue this year. Seventy-five percent of those funds are dedicated to City arts programs. The bill moved out of the Government Operations Committee and is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Other Issues of Significant Interest

Marriage Equality: On Wednesday, February 1st, [SB 6239](#) was passed by the Senate in a 28 to 21 vote, after the inclusion of seven amendments related to religious exemptions. The bill was referred to the House Judiciary and is scheduled for hearing at 8:00 am on Monday, February 6th. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Affordable Housing: [SB 5952](#) (Concerning low-income and homeless housing assistance surcharges) had a hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 2nd, and it's and companion [HB 2048](#) is moving forward in the House Rules committee. These bills would extend and grow the document recording fee to benefit housing and homeless programs. **Seattle supports this legislation.** Additionally, a substitute version of [SB 6315](#) (Concerning the fair tenant screening act) was passed to the Rules Committee on February 2nd. This bill (and companion [HB 2642](#)) would reduce the costs of tenant screenings while helping to ensure that landlords have the information they need to make sound rental decisions.

Transportation Benefit District Rebate Program: [SB 6215](#), sponsored by Senator David Frockt, would authorize a TBD that imposes tolls, a sales tax, or a vehicle fee to establish a rebate program for the purpose of refunding low income individuals. The bill passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee and was referred to the Rules Committee on January 31st. **Seattle supports this legislation** because it would give us an option to help make our current TBD authority less regressive.

Hazardous Site Clean-Up: [SB 6211](#), which would help accelerate the cleanup of hazardous waste sites, is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on February 6th. **Seattle supports the bill** because it would provide some new tools that could be particularly helpful with the Duwamish cleanup, such as Brownfield Renewal Areas and the creation of a grant-funded trust that could help provide funding for the Duwamish and other sites over multiple biennia.

SEPA Modernization: [HB 2253](#) passed out of the House General Government Operations Committee on February 3rd, and its companion [SB 6130](#) is scheduled for a hearing in Ways and Means on Monday, February 6th. This legislation aims to modernize SEPA and promote responsible development by streamlining the process while still protecting the environment. The House and Senate prime sponsors are working closely together on this legislation, and Seattle continues to engage in this process as the legislation moves forward.

Product Stewardship: The legislature is considering a number of bills to protect our environment through product stewardship. Carpet recycling legislation ([SB 6341](#)) was passed out of the Senate Environment Committee on Friday and was referred to Ways and Means. [HB 2450](#), which would establish a manufacture-funded rechargeable battery recycling and drop off program, was heard in the General Government Appropriations & Oversight Committee on February 2nd. [SB 6120](#), to limit toxics in children's products was heard in Senate Ways and Means on January 26, where Seattle's letter of support was shared with the committee members. [SB 6180](#) (Reducing costs and inefficiencies in elections) would reduce the size of printed voters' guides and was passed to the Senate Rules Committee. **Seattle supports these bills. Seattle also supports [SB 5234](#)**, which would create a statewide program to collect and dispose unwanted medicines. This legislation remains in the Rules committee. None of the legislation related to plastic shopping bags was passed out of the policy committees, including

Representative Fitzgibbon's legislation ([HB 2404](#)) to create a statewide program that would be similar to Seattle's model.

Peer Car Sharing: [SB 6426](#)/ [HB 2384](#) would regulate personal vehicle sharing programs. The Senate bill was referred to Rules on February 2nd, and the House bill, which is sponsored by Representative Hudgins, was referred to Rules Committee on January 30th. [HB 2445](#) to regulating mileage-based insurance was not passed out of the policy committee. [HB 2361](#), to allow usage-based automobile insurance, passed out of committee, and its substituted version was referred to the Rules Committee on January 31st.

Towing: [HB 2372](#) (Concerning fees and rates for tow truck services and vehicle storage) would direct the Department of Licensing to set maximum towing fees across the state. The House Transportation Committee passed out a substitute version of the bill on February 1st. This legislation is sponsored by Representative Gerry Pollet. We are carefully reviewing the substitute bill, which now preempts local regulations, and are working with the bill's prime sponsors and others to ensure the final version of the legislation adequately protects consumers.

Energy Independence Act: The bills that make broad changes to the initiative ([SB 6396](#) and [HB 2654](#)) did not pass out of Committee. However, [HB 2688](#), which establishes a prequalification process for public utility to ensure potential renewable or conservation projects passed out of the House Environment Committee and was referred to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Energy Consumption Data: Seattle City Light testified with **concerns** on [SB 6398](#), which included a number of provisions that would require utilities to provide consumption reports and comparisons to all their residential customers. City Light is currently conducting a pilot project on this topic and the legislation was premature. The bill did not make it out of Committee.

Body Worn Cameras: [SB 6066](#) would have simply extended the current audio recording exemption for dash board cameras to cameras worn by uniformed police offers. **Seattle supported this bill and testified in favor of it.** Representatives from the media testified in support of the underlying bill, but also sought amendments that would modify the relationship between privacy and public records laws. Language satisfactory to all interested parties was not able to be reached, and the bill did not move forward.

City Speed Limits: In order to improve public safety on city streets, [HB 1217](#) would make it easier for local authorities to set 20 mph speed limits on certain local, non-arterial streets. The bill passed the House 96-0 and was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Health Care: Companions bills [SB 6185](#) and [HB 2330](#) would ensure that any health insurance plans that provide coverage for maternity care must also provide equivalent coverage for the voluntary termination of pregnancy, within current law and with the exception of a federally designated plan that does not cover this procedure under federal law. On February 2nd, SB 6185 was referred to the Rules Committee, and HB 2330 was referred to Ways & Means on January 31st. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Sick Leave: Neither SB 6229 or HB 2508 were passed out of their policy committees. This companion legislation proposed using a model that is similar to Seattle's legislation to establish minimum standards for sick and safe leave from employment.

Looking Ahead

Tuesday will be the last day for bills to be heard in their fiscal committees in the House of origin. Some of the key topics up for hearings and executive sessions in fiscal committees include local transportation funding, DWLS3, local fiscal health, and hazardous site cleanups.