

CITY OF SEATTLE
2005 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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The Senate will release their version of the operating and capital budgets on March 28.

Governor Gregoire released her 2005-07 operating and capital budgets on March 21. Most of the deficit was made up through budget cuts, using reserves or one time funding sources. Due to a very positive revenue forecast there were only two tax proposals and only one was a new proposal. The budget includes an increase of 20-cents for each pack of cigarettes which would raise \$80 million. It also includes a new version of the estate tax for those over \$2 million but exempting farms. This would raise approximately \$129 million. Highlights of the budgets include:

Operating Budget – HB 2297 and SB 6090:

Governor Gregoire restores \$80 million of the \$82 million scheduled to be lost by a reinterpretation of the Medicaid rules relating to mental health services. The Federal government changed its interpretation of how money saved by a state could be used. Previously the state could redirect those dollars to cover services for folks not eligible for Medicaid. The reinterpretation means those saved dollars stay with the Federal government.

General Assistance for the Unemployable (GAU) was not completely eliminated as in Gov. Locke's budget proposal but there is an \$18 million reduction. This reduction leaves approximately \$96 million for GAU.

Governor Gregoire expanded chemical dependency treatment in the same manner proposed by Governor Locke. Approximately \$30 million will be used to increase treatment for adults with chemically dependent problems. The goal is to increase coverage to 40% of those needing treatment by the end of Fiscal Year 2006 and 60% by the end of Fiscal Year 2007.

The budget also contains the \$49 million necessary to continue to "backfill" the public health funding that was lost when the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax was repealed by the legislature.

Capital Budget – HB 2298 and SB 6094:

Housing Trust Fund - \$82,000,000

Salmon Recovery Funding Board - \$64,000,000

WA Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP) - \$45,000,000 (Myrtle Edwards Park Beach Restoration, Ercolini Park Acquisition and Lower Woodland Skate Park, Phase I)

Asian Counseling and Referral Service - \$5,000,000

McCaw Hall - \$3,500,000

Wing Luke Museum - \$3,000,000

Colman School - \$700,000

El Centro de la Raza - \$500,000

Japanese Cultural and Community Center - \$300,000

Filipino Community Center - \$200,000

SESSION PRIORITIES

Transportation Solutions

ESHB 2157 would establish the Regional Transportation Improvement Authority (RTIA) that could be formed by King, Pierce and/or Snohomish counties or individually. Kitsap County could also form a RTIA or annex to an already formed version. Single county RTIA's would be the entire county. If more than one county then the urban growth boundaries shall be used. County council members and county executives will serve on the RTIA's. Voting authority will be prorated based on the population within the RTIA. Large cities would be represented on the RTIA but not allowed voting rights. The Puget Sound Regional Council will prepare a list of priority projects. The following revenue options would be available to the RTIA: \$100 vehicle license fee (VLF), 0.2% sales tax (revoted every 10 years), 0.6% motor vehicle excise tax (MVET), value pricing or high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Revenues will be used for highways, local roadways of regional significance, high capacity transportation, transit and transportation demand strategies. Priority will be given to structures at risk of failure. The county council places the project list and revenue plan on the ballot for approval of the voters. This bill was heard in the Senate Transportation Committee.

SB 6012 would make transportation an authorized use for parking and business improvement areas. This bill will be heard on March 29 in the House Transportation Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

State Funding

SHB 1903 creates the Job Development Fund. This legislation would provide a new grant mechanism for infrastructure to stimulate community and economic development. In the 2005-07 biennium \$25 million would be appropriated for this program. Beginning in the 2007-09 biennium up to \$50 million would be made available. The Community Economic Revitalization Board will administer 70% of the funds after approval of the legislature. The additional 30% would be made available for grants for important projects that might not meet the legislative timelines. This bill will be heard in the Senate International Trade & Economic Development Committee on March 29. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

E2SSB 5581 creates the life sciences discovery fund using revenue from the tobacco settlement case. These revenues will be used to support the Bio 21 effort and future statewide, comprehensive strategies to lead the nation in life sciences-related research & employment. This bill will be heard in the House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee on March 29. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

HB 1049 authorizes funding for projects recommended by the public works board. Seattle has three storm sewer projects on the funding list totaling almost \$5.7 million. The Governor will sign this bill into law on March 28. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Session Objectives

Civil Rights

SHB 1515 which adds sexual orientation to the state discrimination laws was amended and passed out of the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee. The bill will be referred to the Rules Committee. We continue to work with other advocates to help pass this bill. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Clean Cars

ESHB 1397 which would adopt the California vehicle emission standards for Washington State will be heard in the Senate Water, Energy & Environment Committee on March 29. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Firearm Safety

SHB 1687 which would restrict the possession of firearms of persons who are found not guilty by reasons of insanity was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

McCaw Hall

Gov. Gregoire's Capital Budget contained \$3.5 million for McCaw Hall. Gov. Locke had \$2 million in his last budget proposal.

Public Disclosure

2SHB 1785 would make some changes to the Public Disclosure Act as it relates to overly broad requests. Public agencies would not be allowed to refuse a request because it was overly broad however they could ask for a down payment, provide the information in smaller batches and continue to request clarification to help specify the request. As currently written the legislation does not affect the issue of attorney-client privilege.

POLICY ISSUES

Energy

ESSB 5098 and **ESHB 1062** which establish efficiency standards for appliances and other products will both have hearings in the House and Senate. An attempt is being made to remove commercial washers and TV adapters from these bills. **We support these measures.**

Growth Management & Land Use

ESHB 2171 which allows cities and counties a one year extension to complete their critical areas ordinance was heard in the Senate Government Operations Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

Human Services

E2SHB 2163 which establishes a homeless housing program has a hearing in Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee on March 30. This bill provides funding for homeless programs including, construction, acquisition of affordable housing for very low-income, operations and maintenance for housing projects, rental assistance vouchers and overnight shelters. **Seattle supports this measure.**

SSB 5767 which requires all counties to develop Ten-Year Plans to End Homelessness had a hearing and passed out of the House Housing Committee. It now goes to the Rules Committee. **Seattle supports this measure.**

ESHB 1314 creating a domestic violence prevention account through a \$10 fee on marriage licenses and divorce petitions was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **Seattle supports this bill.**

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