

CITY OF SEATTLE
2005 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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SESSION PRIORITIES

Transportation Solutions

The House and Senate Transportation Committees are holding work sessions to hear from local government about their transportation needs. The Association of WA Cities (AWC) is participating and requesting direct distribution to cities and counties from any statewide revenue package. We are also proposing a package of local options for transportation revenue which includes a weight fee, vehicle license fee and an increase in the local option gas tax.

SB 5534 is a bill put forward by the Seattle Monorail to clarify the existing statute and make some additional changes such as allowing 40 year bonds. The Senate Transportation Committee will hear this bill on February 1. Seattle is still reviewing the legislation.

State Funding – Operating

HB 1154, which requires that insurance coverage for mental health services be at parity with medical and surgical services, was approved in the House by a vote of 67-25. This is one piece of a larger effort to fill the “treatment gap” for both mental health and substance abuse services. The House Appropriations Committee will hold a work session on the treatment gap for substance abuse on February 3. The bulk of this effort will be part of the budget and not individual bills.

State Funding – Capital Budget

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 House approved this bill unanimously. It has been assigned to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Civil Rights

HB 1515 which expands the discrimination laws to include sexual orientation will have a public hearing on February 1. The Seattle Sexual Minorities Commission and the Seattle Human Rights Commission will be sending a letter in support. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Consumer Protection

HB 1251 requires a number of steps to disclose information by businesses that provide tax refund anticipation loans however, it is not as strong as Seattle ordinance. It would also preempt local jurisdictions from strengthening the proposed state law. **Seattle is opposed to the preemption component of this legislation.**

HB 1419 and **SB 5266** are also being advanced in reaction to our ordinance that affects tax refund loan institutions. However, the bill is much broader than the tax refund business because it prohibits city regulation of any transactions between financial institutions and their customers.

Firearm Safety

The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on a number of gun safety measures. Lt. Landy Black and Deputy Chief Earl Sodeman testified in support of the measures. **SB 5131** would prohibit persons found not guilty by reasons of insanity to not own weapons. Based on Lt. Black's testimony this may be amended to include persons found incompetent to stand trial. **SB 5343** would close the gun show loophole; **SB 5342** requires firearm safety measures near children; **SB 5474** bans assault weapons; **SB 5545** relates to the renewal of concealed licenses for members of the armed forces and a draft bill that would ban fifty caliber guns were also part of the public hearing. **The City supported these measures**, except SB 5545 which we had not seen prior to the hearing.

Public Disclosure

HB 1350 which would alter the public disclosure act will be heard in the House State Government Operations & Accountability Committee on February 1. This bill was written in response to the ruling in the Hangartner case this past spring. **Seattle opposes this legislation.**

Public Health

SB 5048 which would prevent the distribution of tobacco samples anywhere in WA State was approved by the Senate by a vote of 38-9. This bill has been assigned to the House Health Care Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Trust Water Rights

HB 1098 relating to trust water rights will have a hearing on February 1. **Seattle supports this bill** with amendments we are requesting.

Weights & Measures

HB 1440 and **SB 5401** allowing cities to impose local fees to pay for a weight & measures program were introduced and assigned to the House Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade Committee and the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee. **Seattle supports these measures.**

POLICY ISSUES

Education

SB 5144 and **SJR 8202** were heard in the Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education Committee on January 26. The companion bills **HB 1484** and **HJR 4205** will be heard in the House Education Committee on January 31. These bills would allow for a simple majority to authorize school levies and bonds. **SJR 8202** and **HJR 4205** are constitutional amendments which must be approved by the legislature and passed by the voters to enact the new legislation. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Elections and General Government

SB 5367 would allow public financing for local campaigns. It will be heard in the Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee on February 3. The companion bill **HB 1436** will be heard in the House State Government Operations & Accountability Committee on February 4. **HB 1526** would set up a public financing system for state offices and also provide local governments this option. This bill will also be heard on February 4. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Energy

Governor Locke, in conjunction with the West Coast Governors, introduced a number of bills to reduce greenhouse gas emission. Hearings were held on **HB 1062**, the companion to **SB 5098**, which sets efficiency standards for commercial appliances (e.g. sprayer valves and refrigerators). **SB 5100** sets statewide goals and sets up a program which would assist us in purchasing emission credits. **Seattle supports these bills** since they would help us reach our electricity and water conservation goals.

Representative Jeff Morris held a study session on **HB 1011** which would establish statewide interconnection standards for multi-sized alternative generation facilities. Dave Van Holde and Jim Harding with City Light participated in the work session.

Transportation

HB 1179, authorizing high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes as a pilot project on SR 167, will be heard in the House Transportation Committee on January 31. The companion bill, **SB 5201**, was heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on January 25. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

HB 1090 would require pictograms on any monorail, light rail or commuter rail routes to help non-English speaking visitors using these transportation systems. This bill will be heard in the House Transportation Committee on January 31. The companion bill **SB 5394** will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee also on January 31. **Seattle supports these measures.**

Water

SB 5338 and **SJR 8205** were introduced and hearing will be held on February 2. **SB 5338** would establish new water courts, but it would also require an amendment to our state constitution. **SJR 8205** calls for a vote of the people to approve or deny such an amendment.

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