



CITY OF SEATTLE 2015 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Number 2

The City of Seattle is committed to being a safe, vibrant, interconnected, and affordable city.

Week Overview

The second week of session saw committees getting into gear, with full slates of hearings, work sessions, and executive action on bills. Legislators adopted the session cut-off calendar – March 11th will be the final cutoff for bills to be heard in their chamber of origin. One potential stumbling block in the smooth process of progressing legislation is the fact that Senate Republicans have not yet officially organized a Rules committee, which could cause a backlog in bills getting to the Senate floor. The following link to the Official State Legislative [website](#) will provide access to Committee Schedules; and information on specific introduced legislation can be found [here](#). This is a useful tool for checking on bill status, sponsors, companion bills and summaries of testimony.

Priority Areas

Budget

Both the House and Senate held hearing and work sessions on the Governor's Revenue proposals this week, with the Carbon Revenue proposal receiving tough questions in the Senate Ways and Means committee hearing. These are just the opening rounds of what will be a long discussion throughout session.

In addition, 36 of the State's 48 Senators introduced [SJR 8201](#), a constitutional amendment requiring supporters of voter initiatives to identify cuts to cover costs associated with an initiative which are outside the state's balanced four year budget. The constitutional amendment would impact any initiatives associated with costs that fall outside of the state's balanced four-year budget. Democratic House Majority Leader Pat Sullivan expressed interest in similar legislation in that chamber.

Education

Democratic Representative Ruth Kagi and Republican Senator Steve Litzow introduced bi-partisan Early Start bills, [HB 1491](#) & [SB 5452](#) to increase access to high quality early learning for children and families. A hearing is scheduled at 1:30 pm on January 28th in the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee and at 1:30 pm on January 26th in Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education.

Democratic Rep. Eric Pettigrew introduced legislation that would give authority to the Mayor of Seattle to appoint 2 members of the Seattle School Board. [HB 1497](#) has been referred to the House Committee on Education but not yet scheduled for a hearing.

Democratic Representative Gerry Pollet has introduced [HB 1240](#), which seeks to place limits on the use of restraints or isolation of both abled and disabled students in schools. A hearing is scheduled on January 26th at 1:30 pm in the House Committee on Education.

A work session on campus sexual assault, a topic that has been very much in the news of late, will be held in the Senate Higher Education Committee on January 27th at 1:30 pm.

Safety Net and Housing

Democrats in both chambers introduced bills to raise the minimum wage to \$12 per hour over the next four years ([HB 1355](#) & [SB 5285](#)). Council Member Jean Godden joined legislators at a press conference on Thursday to announce Democrats Representative Tana Senn and Senator Annette Cleveland's Equal Opportunity Pay Act aimed at closing the gap in pay among female workers and protecting employees from retaliation for sharing compensation information.

The "Employee Anti-Retaliation Act" ([HB 1354](#)) creates protection for employees from retaliation and discrimination. Both house bills and a paid sick days bill ([HB 1356](#) – companion bill [SB 5306](#)) are scheduled for hearings at 1:30 pm on January 26th in the House Labor Committee.

The Department of Planning and Development testified and answered questions about our local process during the continuation of the House Local Government Committee hearing on [HB 1084](#), which would shift authority for determining notice requirements from the City to the State.

Last week, Republican Senator Mark Miloscia's [SB 5208](#), allowing King County lodging tax bonds for affordable housing, passed unanimously out of the Senate Human Services, Mental Health and Housing Committee. In addition to bills on portable tenant screening reports (SB 5123 was heard last week in the Senate); advocates continue to work on several other bills, including prohibiting source of income discrimination and eviction reporting. The Senate is scheduled to hear SB [5404](#), concerning homeless youth prevention and protection on January 29 at 10:30 am in Human Services, Mental Health & Housing; the house bill (HB [1436](#)) has not yet been scheduled for hearing. Both bills have broad bipartisan support.

Last week, Democratic Rep. Brady Walkinshaw introduced a bipartisan [HB 1553](#), encouraging Certificates of Restoration of Opportunity to help people better integrate into the workforce after being incarcerated.

The Governor's proposed budget includes \$100 million for affordable housing, with \$85 million for affordable housing construction. Including:

- \$75m for the HTF (\$60m from a new appropriation from the state taxable building construction acct; \$15m from new appropriation from the WA Housing Trust Acct – the \$ would come from the carbon tax revenue)

- \$5m for a new ultra-efficient affordable housing demonstration
- \$5m for Housing Trust Fund portfolio preservation
- \$15m for weatherization matchmaker program

Environment

Governor Inslee's carbon pollution market program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was introduced in both chambers. The Carbon Pollution Accountability Act, [HB 1314](#) & [SB 5283](#), implements a carbon reduction program for emissions from covered entities by creating tradable allowances. The House Environment committee is holding a hearing on January 27 at 1:30 pm.

Representatives from Seattle's Office of Emergency Management participated in a work session in the Senate Natural Resources Committee Thursday, January 22nd on the issue of geological hazards assessments, in support of agency request legislation to provide funding for LiDAR equipment and programs. There is more information on LiDAR and [SB 5088](#) available at the bill link. The companion bill [HB 1182](#) will be heard on January 28th in Agriculture and Natural Resources at 8:00 am.

Seattle City Light was among a number of advocates and agencies testifying this week in favor of [HB 1278](#), which creates a state-wide energy benchmarking and disclosure program similar to Seattle's successful program. Proponents see providing access to energy information as a win-win for consumers, businesses and the environment.

Continuing the conversation from previous sessions, Representative Van De Wege (D-Sequim) introduced [HB 1174](#), the Toxic Free Kids Act, which bans toxic chemical flame retardants in children's products and residential upholstered furniture. The legislation was introduced last week and a public hearing was held this week.

Legislation ([SB 5181](#)) was introduced to modify the State's Fire Mobilization Plan to include responses to non-fire related disasters such as landslides, earthquakes, floods and contagious diseases.

Several bills modifying I-937 (the Energy Independence Act passed by voters in 2006) have been introduced in the Senate and will be heard on January 29th at 1:30 in the Senate Energy, Environment and Technology Committee. These bills would have implications for Seattle City Light. [SB 5089](#), [5090](#) and [5094](#) seek to add small nuclear modular reactors and incremental hydroelectricity as eligible renewable resources under I-937.

Though it does not yet have a bill number, it is expected there will be a hearing on Monday, January 26th on an extensive proposal to fund water storage, flood control and storm water projects. Cities, counties and the environmental community have been engaged in stakeholder meetings for several months with legislators and will continue to monitor and engage on this proposal.

Transportation

Governor Inslee's request Transportation funding legislation ([HB 1299](#) & [SB 5360](#)) for the 2015-2017 fiscal biennium was introduced on Friday of last week. It is expected that Senate Republicans will introduce their legislation sometime in the next month.

[HB 1180](#), which will provide State authorization to Sound Transit for the "Sound Transit 3" phase of light rail extension, has been scheduled for a hearing in the House Transportation Committee on January 28th at 3:30 pm. The authorization would allow the agency to seek voter approval for increases in various revenue sources, including the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax, property taxes and sales and use tax.

Several local jurisdictions have been working with legislators on possible local options funding to create a dedicated revenue source for local transportation needs. These efforts resulted in [HB 1593](#), which seeks to allow cities to create a "transportation utility".

Public Safety

As local jurisdictions grapple with increased demands in public records requests, made more difficult with the advent of electronic records, legislators have begun searching for remedies. One piece of legislation, [HB 1086](#) seeks to create a cost recovery mechanism for public records which have been sought for commercial purposes. More legislation on this issue is expected to come. This bill was heard in the House State Government Committee on January 20th.

Republican Senator Judy Warnick introduced legislation ([SB 5124](#)) to make it illegal to sell e-cigarettes and vaporizers to minors. Similarly, Attorney General Bob Ferguson announced his plans to introduce legislation ([HB 1458](#) & [SB 5494](#)) to change the minimum age for purchasing cigarettes from 18 years to 21 years of age. Ferguson announced his intentions during a press conference on Wednesday.

On Thursday, a representative from the City Attorney's office testified on behalf of the City in favor of Sen. Kohl-Welles' bill [SB 5277](#) - Making the crime of patronizing a prostitute a gross misdemeanor.

The disparate marijuana markets are generating a lot of attention, with over 20 separate bills having been introduced thus far. Perhaps the most comprehensive pieces are [SB 5052](#), introduced by Republican Senator Ann Rivers, and [SB 5519](#), a bill sponsored by Democratic Senator Jeanne Kohl-Wells. SB 5052 had a hearing on January 22nd, where representatives from the City presented testimony in support of the legislation. Similar testimony is in the works on SB 5519 as well, in the hopes that quality reform legislation will be passed this year.

Additionally on marijuana, Senator Kohl-Welles introduced [SB 5121](#) which establishes a marijuana research license, allowing qualifying research facilities to obtain and possess marijuana for research purposes. This was heard in the Senate Health Care Committee to wide support.

Republican Senator Mike Padden has introduced [SB 5105](#) which would lower the number of prior DUI convictions necessary to trigger a felony offense from 5 to 4. The bill was heard in Senate Law and Justice on January 22, 2015.

[HB 1093](#), which would regulate unmanned aircraft, was heard on January 21st. Democratic Representative Jeff Morris' bill seeks to protect privacy rights of individuals.

Looking Ahead

With hearings on Sound Transit 3, increasing the state minimum wage, paid sick and safe leave, water funding, and the Governor's Carbon Tax program, the third week of session is already shaping up to be jam packed. OIR appreciates the important guiding input that City Departments have been providing on legislation thus far; and will continue to rely on the expertise of our department liaisons as the session ramps up and moves into full gear.