

CITY OF SEATTLE
2009 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

January 26, 2009

Number 2

The 2009 Washington State Legislature began its 105-day session on Monday, January 12. It is scheduled to end on Sunday, April 26. The focus of this session is the budget deficit and efforts to stimulate the economy. A supplemental budget is being prepared for the end of the 2007-09 budget, which is carrying a deficit of over \$500 million. The projected deficit for the 2009-11 biennium is approximately \$5.5 billion. The next revenue forecast is due in March.

The Governor has proposed an economic recovery plan that includes accelerating almost \$1 billion of infrastructure funding across the state.

Much of the first week was focused on the Governor's proposed budget, and organizing the new committee members. During the second week, the committees began to hear greater numbers of policy bills. The first policy bill cut-off is Wednesday, February 25.

SESSION PRIORITIES – 2009

Public Safety

HB 1498, scheduled for a public hearing on January 26, would make changes to state law regarding when a person's right to possess firearms is revoked after a certain time of involuntary commitment for mental health treatment, making state law consistent with federal law. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

SB 5010 was heard in the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee on January 19. SB 5010 would establish a statewide Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) emergency response program. **Seattle is monitoring this legislation.**

Housing Resources

HB 1464 was introduced in the House. HB 1464 makes modification to the incentive zoning for affordable housing statute. We anticipate this bill will be scheduled in the House Local Government Committee next week. The Senate version will likely be introduced next week. **Seattle supports this bill.**

The Employer Assisted Housing bill, which provides an incentive to employers to provide housing assistance to employees, will likely be introduced in the House and Senate next week. **Seattle supports this proposal.**

The Housing Everyone Finance Tool is garnering support and will soon be introduced. **Seattle supports this proposal.**

Regional Transportation

There will be briefings on the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement project in the Senate Transportation Committee on January 26 and in the House Transportation Committee on January 28. There will also be a briefing on the SR 520 project in the Senate Transportation Committee on January 29.

STATEMENT OF POLICY – 2009

Annexation

SB 5321, extending the time period for cities to access a state sales tax credit to help offset the increased service costs in a newly annexed area, was introduced and assigned to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. Although this bill would allow Seattle to use this tool, the legislation does not reflect the North Highline agreement reached with other jurisdictions. The bill would provide an estimated amount of \$600,000 if Seattle were to annex any portion of the North Highline community. **Seattle does not support this legislation.**

Climate Protection & Environment

HB 1490 has been introduced and is scheduled for a hearing on January 28 in the House Local Government and Housing Committee. HB 1490 would reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use and transportation requirements. **Seattle is monitoring this legislation.**

OIR lobby staff and government relations staff for Seattle City Light met with Senate legislative staff regarding Governor Gregoire's forthcoming climate change proposal.

Energy

HB 1133 was heard in the House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee. HB 1133 would make modifications to the energy independence act, created by the passage of I-937. **Seattle is monitoring this legislation.**

Hazardous and Solid Waste

HB 1165 was heard in the House Environmental Health Committee on January 21. HB 1165 provides for the safe collection and disposal of unwanted drugs from residential sources through a producer-provided and funded product stewardship program. **Seattle supports this bill.**

HB 1460 has been introduced and is scheduled for a hearing on January 28 in the House Environmental Health Committee. HB 1460 would establish the product stewardship recycling act for mercury-containing lights. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Human Services

The House Human Services Committee held a work session on January 22 for an in-depth look at the General Assistance-Unemployable (GA-U) program. **The City of Seattle testified about impacts of cuts to GA-U on public safety.**

Infrastructure/Finance

HB 1048 and SB 5047 would repeal RCW 35.87 which requires sale of municipal property in commercial zones to first be put out to bid for use as free parking. Both bills are in the respective Rules Committees. **Seattle supports these bills.**

HB 1422, concerning the taxation of brokered natural gas and manufactured gas, has been introduced and assigned to the House Finance Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

HB 1069 would enact new requirements for exterior and outdoor lighting fixtures. **Seattle testified to strong concerns** about the potential impacts on Seattle Parks and Recreation and other departments before the House Local Government Committee. Seattle attended a subsequent stakeholder meeting, which indicated that the issue may be headed away from legislation and toward a State Building Code Council administrative process.

Seattle Parks and City Attorney's staff, along with City lobbyists, worked this week with advocates for a bill relating to gender equity in parks facilities. The legislation is similar to a bill from the 2008 session, and we are working together to arrive at a compromise and monitoring the issue.

The Washington Recreation and Parks Association lobby day was January 22nd. Seattle Parks Department staff, joined by Seattle lobby staff, met with key legislators throughout the day.