



## CITY OF SEATTLE 2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Number 3

### Week Overview

In the third week of the legislative session, the legislature packed their days with committee hearings, work sessions, and executive sessions from early in the morning until late in the evening, in an effort to make up time lost during the snow storm. On Monday, advocates also filled the capitol for hearings in the House and Senate on marriage equality.

Mayor McGinn co-hosted a transportation forum with other Mayors in order to help larger-city Mayors from across the state coordinate more effectively on both short- and long-term transportation advocacy efforts. In addition, Council President Clark attended the AWC board meeting.

### 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. Mayor McGinn, Councilmember Burgess, and Assistant Chief Pugel all testified together in support of the legislation during the public hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Education**

K-12 Reform: This week, the legislature held hearings on a variety of bills related to Washington's K-12 education system, including legislation that would make changes in the way that teachers and principals are evaluated. HB 2165/SB 6318 (Facilitating statewide implementation of revised teacher and principal evaluation systems through professional development and training), HB 2334/SB 6317 (Establishing a statewide plan for implementing revised teacher and principal evaluation systems to support continuous professional growth based on the development work of pilot school districts), HB 2309/SB 6278 (Regarding provisional school employees' contracts), and HB 2427/SB 6203 (Implementing revised teacher and principal evaluation systems), were all heard.

Representative Pettigrew is championing HB 2309 and HB 2427. The legislature will be considering issues such as if to implement seniority-based lay-off policies, how to incorporate evaluations, and how soon to implement change. We are reviewing and watching this legislation.

## **Economic development**

Transportation Package: Governor Gregoire has proposed a \$3.8 billion transportation package. Details were released late in the week. Much of the package is funded through a significant fee on petroleum of \$1.50 per barrel as well as considerable increases to other transportation-related fees. The proposal also includes additional local funding options, including a 1% motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) for counties and additional transportation benefit district flexibility. The City is working with legislators to provide additional local funding options.

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 held a public hearing on (SB 6265) on January 18. **Kelsey Beck testified in support of this legislation on behalf of the City** because it provides additional clarity and regulatory authority for local jurisdictions, while preserving access for patients. Seattle is working with Sen. Kohl-Welles, cities, and other stakeholders to craft mutually agreeable language regarding the extent of local governments' regulatory authorities.

DWLS3: Senator Adam Kline has sponsored legislation (SB 6284) to authorize a civil collection process for unpaid traffic fines, removing the requirement for law enforcement intervention for the failure to appear and pay certain traffic tickets. On Jan 25, it had a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **Darby DuComb from the Law Department testified in support of this legislation on behalf of the City**, and we are working closely with representatives from the law enforcement community on potential amendments that would lead them to support the bill. Its companion bill (HB 2680) is scheduled for a hearing in the House Transportation Committee on Tuesday, January 31st.

## **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). Neither bill has been scheduled for a hearing. **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 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.

## **Other Issues of Significant Interest**

**Marriage Equality:** Both bills on marriage equality (SB 6239 and HB 2516) were heard on Monday, and the Senate leadership announced that they have enough votes to pass the measure. **SB 6239** was passed out of the Government Operations and Tribal Relations & Elections Committee. **HB 2516** is scheduled for executive session in the House Judiciary Committee on Monday, January 30. **Seattle supports this legislation** and signed-in to demonstrate this support.

**Affordable Housing:** SB 5952 (and companion HB 2048) would extend and grow the document recording fee to benefit housing and homeless programs. HB 2048 was moved forward in the House Rules Committee, and SB 2952 passed out of the Senate Financial Institutions and Housing & Insurance Committee and referred to Senate Ways & Means. **Seattle supports this legislation.** Additionally, SB 6315 (Concerning the fair tenant screening act) will be heard on January 31 in the Senate Financial Institutions and Housing & Insurance Committee. 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. 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, had a public hearing in the Senate Environment Committee on January 25th. **Susan Saffery from Seattle Public Utilities testified in support of the legislation** on behalf of the City. The bill 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 was passed out of the House Environment Committee on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Like companion bill SB 6130, 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 has expressed its thoughts and concerns.

**Product Stewardship:** The legislature is considering a number of bills to protect our environment through product stewardship. Carpet recycling legislation (SSB 5110) was heard in draft form and has now been formally released. HB 2450/SB 6148 would establish a manufacture-funded rechargeable battery recycling and drop off program. The House bill was heard on January 20<sup>th</sup>, and the Senate bill was heard on January 24<sup>th</sup>. HB 2384, to regulate and allow for car sharing, had executive action on January 26 in the House Business & Financial Services Committee, and 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. HB 2419 (Reducing costs and inefficiencies in elections) would reduce the size of printed voters' guides and was heard on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Seattle supports these bills.** Additionally, the legislature is considering legislation to ban plastic bags, including Representative Fitzgibbon's legislation (HB 2404) to create a statewide program that would be similar to Seattle's model, which was heard in House Environment Committee on January 20. **Seattle Public Utilities testified on the merits of this model.** Seattle also supports SB 5234, which would create a statewide program

to collect and dispose unwanted medicines. This legislation was moved forward in the Senate Rules committee.

Peer Car Sharing: SB 6426/ HB 2384 would regulate personal vehicle sharing programs. The Senate bill had a committee hearing on January 25<sup>th</sup>, and the House bill, which is sponsored by Representative Hudgins, was passed out of the House Business & Financial Services Committee on January 26<sup>th</sup>. HB 2445 to regulating mileage-based insurance and HB 2361 to allow usage-based automobile insurance are both waiting for executive action in the House Business and Financial Services committee.

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 legislation was heard in the House Transportation Committee on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and is sponsored by Representative Gerry Pollet. Seattle is working on this bill.

Energy Independence Act: **Seattle City Light testified regarding bills which attempt to amend I-937.** SB 6396 and HB 2654 make broad changes to the initiative, including adding eligible renewables. Both bills provide important provisions for City Light, including rolling over excess conservation into the next biennium, clarifying the definition of cogeneration and providing for a prequalification process for conservation and renewable projects. In addition, HB 2688 was also heard, which only deals with the prequalification process. We are receptive to the legislation, however many of the provisions need to be amended to provide better clarification.

Body Worn Cameras: Senator Kline prime sponsored SB 6066, which simply extends the current audio recording exemption for dash board cameras to cameras worn by uniformed police officers. SB 6066 was heard on January 17 in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **Councilmember Bruce Harrell and Craig Engelking testified in support of the bill on behalf of the City.** Representatives from the media testified in support of the underlying bill, but they also seek amendments that would modify the relationship between privacy and public records laws. Seattle is reviewing the proposed amendments and working with the bill's sponsor.

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 January 26, **HB 2330** was passed out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Sick Leave: SB 6229 uses a model that is similar to Seattle's legislation to establish minimum standards for sick and safe leave from employment. The bill was heard in Senate Labor and Commerce & Consumer Protection on January 26<sup>th</sup> and is sponsored by Senator Kohl-Welles. Representative Mary Lou Dickerson sponsored its companion HB 2508, which was heard in the House Labor & Workforce Development Committee on January 25<sup>th</sup>. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

## **Looking Ahead**

Next Tuesday and Thursday will be the last days for bills to be heard in their policy committees in the House of origin, so most committees are focusing on executive sessions to consider bills that will be moving forward. This means that there will be a scramble to make last minute changes to bills and an eventual reduction in the number of new bills that are being introduced each day.

Some of the key topics up for hearings and executive sessions include marriage equality, metal theft, DWLS3, education reforms, I-937, and tenant screenings.