



**CITY OF SEATTLE  
2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**

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**Week Overview**

Last Thursday, the legislature hit house of origin cut-off, and then switched back to committee action for the rest of the week. Bills that failed to pass out of their house of origin by Tuesday are considered dead for the session, unless they are deemed necessary to implement the budget. Also last week, the latest revenue forecast came out and revenues are up slightly. Combined with lower than expected caseloads, the budget situation is not as bad as previously thought. The deficit is now closer to \$1 billion. Meanwhile, work continued behind the scenes on the budget and House Democrats are set to unveil their proposal this week.

**Areas of Primary Focus**

**Protecting the most vulnerable**

Human Trafficking: The legislature has introduced a package of bills to address the problem of human sex trafficking in our state, including [SSB 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 it passed the Senate 49-0 on February 8<sup>th</sup>. It has now moved to the House, where it had a public hearing in the Public Safety Committee. **Chief Jim Pugel and Craig Engelking testified in support of the legislation on behalf of the City.**

**Education**

K-12 Reform: [SB 5895](#) reforms the way teachers and principals are evaluated. It is largely an agreed to bill, and passed the Senate 46-3. It had a public hearing in the House and passed out of Committee. It requires school districts to revise the way they evaluate teachers and principals with a basic rating system that must reflect student growth data, requires more focused evaluations, increases accountability and support, and creates a pilot project to help determine the best ways to include teacher performance in reduction in force and assignment decisions.

## Economic development

Transportation Funding: [SB 6582](#) and [HB 2751](#) provide a number of local transportation options. SB 6582 was amended on the Senate floor, and the city gas tax option was removed. We had been working closely with other stakeholders and legislators to perfect the MVET authority, but were unable to reach agreement in time to secure enough votes to adopt the amendment. The bill is now working its way through the House, where we will continue working with legislators, cities, counties, and other stakeholders to craft the best possible set of options.

Meanwhile [SSB 6455](#) and [SHB 2660](#), which would raise transportation fees primarily to generate state revenue, are also moving. These Governor request bills originally included a \$1.50 fee per barrel of petroleum, but that was stripped out and the legislation now raises considerably less revenue. The Senate bill passed out and is scheduled for a hearing on February 20<sup>th</sup> in the House.

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. We are still waiting for the final proposals to be released.

## Public safety

Medical Marijuana: [SSB 6265](#), which addresses the medical use of cannabis, failed to pass out of the Senate before cutoff. **Seattle supported this legislation** because it would have provided additional clarity and regulatory authority for local jurisdictions, while preserving access for patients. Seattle appreciates all of Sen. Kohl-Welles work on this issue, and we look forward to working on this topic again for next session

DWLS3: [SB 6284](#) reforms Washington's approach to certain traffic infractions. A compromise bill, **which Seattle supports**, passed the Senate on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, by a vote of 35-11, and now goes to the House and is scheduled for a public hearing in the Transportation Committee on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

## City fiscal health

Local Revenue Authority: The cities continue to work with the Governor's office and legislators on a compromise version of [SB 6176](#), which is Governor Gregoire's tax simplification bill. Cities opposed the original version of the bill because it would have resulted in significant revenue losses. We are working on potential compromise language that is revenue neutral for cities, would improve coordination between state and local governments, and is simpler for businesses.

[SB 6574](#) allows the City to continue to collect an admissions tax for Husky football games while the Huskies are temporarily relocated to Century Link for this season. **Seattle supports this bill** because without it, we would lose up to \$900,000 in revenue in 2012. Seventy-five percent of those funds are dedicated to City arts programs. **Councilmember Licata testified in favor of this bill in the Senate.** The bill passed the Senate 36-11 on February 14<sup>th</sup>, and now awaits a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee.

## **Other Issues of Significant Interest**

**Marriage Equality:** On Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, [SB 6239](#) was passed by the Senate in a 28 to 21 vote, after the inclusion of seven amendments related to religious exemptions. The bill then passed the House, 55-43, and on February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Governor signed it into law, effective June 7, 2012. **Seattle supported this legislation.**

**Affordable Housing:** [HB 2048](#) passed the House by a vote of 55-42. This bill, which is sponsored by Rep. Kenney, would extend and grow the document recording fee to benefit housing and homeless programs. **Seattle supports this legislation.** On February 21<sup>st</sup>, it's scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Financial Institutions and Housing & Insurance Committee.

**Fair Tenant Screening Act:** [SB 6315](#), concerning the fair tenant screening act, which is sponsored by Senator Frockt, passed the Senate 46-0 and had a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on February 15th. **Seattle supports this bill** because it would reduce the costs of tenant screenings while helping to ensure that landlords have the information they need to make sound rental decisions. On February 20<sup>th</sup> it's scheduled for executive action in the House Judiciary Committee.

**Transportation Benefit District Rebate Program:** [SB 6215](#), sponsored by Senator 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 taxes and fees paid low income individuals. It passed the Senate 29-20 and is scheduled for a hearing in the House Transportation Committee on February 24<sup>th</sup>. **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, is eligible for a vote in the Senate. **Seattle supports the bill** because it 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. Thank you to Sen. Murray for sponsoring a floor amendment to restore the grant funded trust provisions. Seattle is working with legislators, staff, and other stakeholders to perfect the bill. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, it's scheduled for a hearing in the House Environment Committee.

**SEPA Modernization:** [HB 2253](#) passed the House 92-6 and is now scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Environment Committee on February 21<sup>st</sup>. This legislation, which is sponsored by Rep. Fitzgibbon and Sen. Nelson, 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 supports the legislation** and continues to engage in this process as the legislation is perfected.

**Peer Car Sharing:** [HB 2384](#) would regulate personal vehicle sharing programs. **Seattle supports the bill**, which is sponsored by Representative Hudgins. This bill passed the House by a vote of 73-23. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, it is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Housing & Insurance. [HB 2361](#), to allow usage-based automobile insurance, also passed the House by a 73-23 vote on Friday. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, it is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Housing & Insurance.

Product Stewardship: The legislature is considering a number of bills to protect our environment through product stewardship. [2SSB 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. The bill passed the Senate on Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 41-6, but in a considerably weakened form. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, it is scheduled for executive action in the House Environment Committee. [SB 6180](#), reducing costs and inefficiencies in elections, would reduce the size of printed voters' guides, passed the Senate 47-0, and had a public hearing in the House State Government Committee. **Seattle supports these bills. Seattle also supported [SB 5234](#)**, which would create a statewide program to collect and dispose unwanted medicines, however this bill failed to make it out of the Senate prior to cutoff.

Towing: [ESHB 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. As the bill came out of the Transportation Committee, it contained a statewide cap on towing rates, which Seattle supports, but it also preempted local regulations, which we opposed. Rep. Pollet offered a floor amendment to remove the local preemption, which we supported. The amendment was adopted and the bill passed 55-43. It has been referred to the Senate Transportation Committee and awaits a hearing.

Energy Independence Act: [SSB 6414](#), which allows for a prequalification process for public utilities under I-937, passed out of the Senate unanimously. Seattle City Light testified in support of the bill at hearing in the House Environment Committee because this bill would help allow some significant energy conservation projects to move forward. It was voted out of the Committee the next day. [HB 2783](#) amends the Fuel Mix Report and the off-ramp provision in I-937 to allow purchases from the coal-fired Chehalis TransAlta facility. Seattle City Light testified with concerns because the amendment to the Fuel Mix Report would allow purchases from TransAlta be recorded as "other." City Light believes that undermines the purpose of the report which is to communicate to our customers the sources of fuel.

City Speed Limits: In order to improve public safety on city streets, [HB 1217](#) would make it easier for local authorities to set 20 mph speed limits on certain local, non-arterial streets. This bill passed the House 96-0 and had a public hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee. **CP Sally Clark testified in support of this legislation on behalf of the City.**

Health Care: [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. It passed the House 52-56 and had a public hearing in the Senate Health Care Committee. **Seattle supports this legislation.**

Design Build Professionals' Liability: [SHB 1559](#) addresses indemnification agreements involving design professionals. It passed the House 98-0. On February 20<sup>th</sup>, it is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Labor and Commerce & Consumer Protection. **Seattle, along with AWC and other governmental entities, opposes this legislation** because it protects the design professional not those harmed, shifts liability from design professionals onto governments, and will interfere with cities' ability to negotiate contracts with design professional. We are working with legislators and stakeholders on language to improve the bill.

Credit Unions: [SB 5913](#) Increases the permissible deposit of public funds with credit unions. It passed the Senate 43-2, had a public hearing in the House Business and Financial Institutions Committee, and has been referred to Rules. Seattle supports this legislation.