



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Legislative Update

February 22, 2022

This is WACD's fifth week of subscription-only legislative updates. These weekly updates contains timely information about legislative activities that may affect conservation districts in Washington State.

1. WACD's Initial Comments on Draft Budgets

Monday, February 21st saw the release of 3 major budget proposals:

- House FY 23 Supplemental Operating Budget
- House FY 23 Supplemental Capital Budget
- Senate FY 23 Supplemental Operating Budget

WACD will have a fuller debrief in the next day or so, but the initial review is **very promising**. Both chambers' versions would see a dramatic increase in funding for voluntary riparian programs, over \$100 million in both budgets spread across several natural resource agencies. The House versions would see approximately \$23 million go to the Commission, while the Senate would inject \$28 million into the Commission's total budget.

Right now we are conferring with our lobbyist, gathering information, and confirming budget numbers with Commission staff. We hope to send a message out to districts very soon with our summary and how districts can engage with their legislators in the remainder of this session.

2. Approaching the Next Cutoff

During the Legislative session, proposals must reach specific checkmarks at certain times in order to continue along the process to becoming a law. We have now hurdled three benchmarks and are coming on a fourth, where legislation must be adopted by the policy committee in the opposite chamber by February 24th.

WACD gathered all the bills from our [watch list](#) that are still standing and put them in [one place](#) on our website, which is updated as bills are adopted.

3. General Legislative Review

As part of her services, WACD Lobbyist Brynn Brady writes a summary of the previous week's major legislative activity. This week's coverage includes:

- Easing COVID restrictions
- Legislation that did not survive the Feb 15th Cut-Off
- Priority legislation for the Democratic majority

You can read [her full review](#) on the WACD Hub website.

4. Looking Ahead

Now that budget proposals are released, budget writers will race to get their bills passed in committee and through their respective chamber before whatever agreements that were made fall apart. For example, the Senate's operating budget was released 12 o'clock Monday afternoon and was heard in committee at 3:30 PM. With a vote scheduled for Wednesday and an expected vote by the full Senate by the weekend. By design, this hurried timeline leaves little opportunity for public input.

Where WACD and the districts can educate lawmakers is when negotiations begin to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of bills. This will be WACD's target area, between now and the end of the legislative session (since the final budget is usually the last bill adopted each year).

5. Budget Handouts

We want to ensure districts have access to budget handouts that tell the story of programs important to district priorities. The Conservation Commission has several excellent one-pagers on their requests for this session. WACD also has a budget one-pager [with its priorities](#) for this session

- [Conservation Equity and Engagement](#)
 - [Sustainable Farms and Fields](#)
 - [Farmland Preservation](#)
-

Ryan's Random Bill of the Week

A moment occurred on the floor of the House of Representatives this afternoon that perfectly fits this column's theme of finding whimsical and lightheaded moments amid the serious deliberations that take place here in Olympia. During testimony on [HB 1928](#), Rep Ed Orcutt (R-Cathlamet) took the floor in support of the proposal to modify the rules regarding the competitive equine industry. In his 90 seconds, which was conducted with a straight-face, I counted at least eleven horse racing puns. Throughout his speech and afterwards, you could heard laughter coming from the Representatives on the floor and online.

Unfortunately, TVW has not uploaded the video yet. I plan on including the clip in all its glory in next week's newsletter. Consider it a teaser.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#)

711 Capitol Way South, Suite 707, Olympia, WA 98501

MailPoet