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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Legislative Update

February 20, 2023

This is WACD's sixth week of legislative updates for 2023. These weekly updates contain timely information about legislative activities affecting conservation districts in Washington State.

1. Riparian Buffer Proposal Amended

HB 1720 was amended last Friday, February 17th in the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources to create a second grant program within the Recreation and Conservation Office's Salmon Recovery Funding Board alongside the Commission's. The bill was unanimously adopted by the committee, but the amendments does push WACD's position from PRO to OTHER. Executive Director Tom Salzer submitted written testimony on the bill heard in the House Capital Budget committee this morning, you can view [his remarks](#) on the WACD HUB.

This bill was the focus of a TVW interview over the weekend that WACD staff recommend to anyone interested in this topic. It was done with both House Ag Committee Chair Mike Chapman (D-Port Angeles) and bill co-sponsor Rep. Joel Kretz (R-Wauconda) discussing how important the topic is and their decision to take politics out of the conversation around HB 1720. You can view the [20 minute interview online](#).

2. Bills Still Alive

Last Friday was also "Policy Cut-off", where legislation must be approved by at least one committee or be lost for the remainder of the session. 36 bills on our Watchlist made it through this first hurdle, where they will now be re-heard in a separate committee for their fiscal impact. Those 36 bills are now alongside hundreds of others

that must be adopted by their respective financial committee by this Friday, February 24th. You can keep track of [what's still active](#) this session on the WACD Hub.

3. Bills Left Behind

Despite 36 bills on our watchlist making it through Policy Cut-Off, 28 more did not. Some bills were left behind because a similar proposal is progressing after reaching a compromise. Others were made redundant. And an agonizing few bills fell victim to horse-trading or got caught up in the legislative whirlwind. WACD moved all these bills to a [new Watch List](#). It is still possible some of these concepts will resurface elsewhere in session, but is a definite blow to some good legislation.

4. Legislative Overview

As part of her services, WACD lobbyist Brynn Brady writes a summary of the week's major legislative activities, giving us a wide view of legislative interests. This week's coverage includes:

- Wealth Tax Proposal
- Vehicle Pursuit
- Hospital Staffing

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

5. Hearings This Week

[WACD's Legislative Watch List](#) includes information on which of the bills we're following are scheduled for a public hearing. This is the week for bills to be heard in committee on their fiscal impact, Friday, February 24th is "Fiscal Cut-Off". Those that survive this week will be eligible for a vote by either the full House or the full Senate. Among the bills we're tracking up for a hearing this week include:

- [HB 1216](#) (Concerning clean energy siting) is being heard in the House Committee on Appropriations at 1:30 PM on Tuesday, February 21st.
- [SB 5688](#) (Providing carbon sequestration and ecosystem services in the management of public lands) is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Ways & Means at 1:30 PM on Wednesday, February 22nd.

You can sign up to testify on these bills, or any other, at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/> for either remote or in-person testimony.

Ryan's Bill of The week

Amidst the serious and weighty discussion that come in a legislative session, it is a pleasant surprise to find lighter fare. [SB 5698](#) would establish basalt cactus as Washington state's cactus. The proposal comes from the a class project on shrubsteppe habitat at the Discovery Lab community school in Ellensburg and was submitted by Senator Judy Warnick. You can read more about the elementary students' proposal via this [Oregon Public Broadcasting article](#).



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