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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Legislative Update

February 27, 2023

This is WACD's seventh week of legislative updates for 2023. This is Day 50 of the 105 day legislative session, nearly halfway through. These weekly updates contain timely information about legislative activities affecting conservation districts in Washington State.

1. Riparian Bills Stalls

The biggest bill that did not survive last Friday's Fiscal Cut-off is [HB 1720](#). The riparian buffer bill received a positive hearing on Monday the 20th, but two days later was skipped over for a vote in the Capital Budget Committee. This bill is no longer relevant for the 2023 legislative session.

However, there is still hope. The partnership between tribal entities and agricultural groups, as well as the [bipartisan approach](#) taken by House Ag Committee members, created a powerful group of supporters. We expect the interest around increased salmon recovery funding to continue throughout the remainder of the legislative session and WACD will work to see additional funds dedicated to voluntary conservation approaches in the final budget.

In summary, while HB 1720 is dead for this session, funding for riparian habitat work may still be allocated in the budget process.

2. Fiscal Cut-Off

[WACD's Legislative Watch List](#) is up-to-date following Friday's cutoff, removing the eight bills on our watchlist that did not make it through the necessary fiscally-oriented

committee. For one reason or another, these bills had enough support on the merits of the policy but not enough when it came to fiscal impacts. Here are some of the other bills WACD was closely following (for one reason or another) that did not make it over the fiscal hurdle:

- [HB 1698](#) – Providing flexibility for the department of fish and wildlife to collaborate with local governments to manage gray wolves.
- [HB 1740](#) – Concerning eligibility, enrollment, and compensation of small forestland owners volunteering for participation in the forestry riparian easement program.
- [SB 5651](#) – Concerning equity and environmental justice in the growth management act.
- [SB 5688](#) – Providing carbon sequestration and ecosystem services in the management of public lands.

3. Legislative Terminology

For those who don't have a copy of the Washington State Legislative Manual (like Ryan does) but would still like to understand the process, here is a [brief explanation](#) of the words you'll hear in the next days of the legislative session if you're watching TVW:

- **Rules Committee** – All proposed legislation goes through this committee and only comes out when it's wanted for a vote. Think of it like a dam, with a lot of bills coming in and a few coming out at a regular, metered pace.
- **Rules Pull** – When the Rules Committee meets, each member is allowed to select a set number of bills that move to the Floor Calendar. Bills "pulled from Rules" are eligible for a vote.
- **Floor Calendar** – A floor calendar is the term for the document prepared each day of session with all the bills eligible to be voted on that day by either the House or the Senate.
- **Second Reading** – When either body is debating a particular bill and voting on amendments.
- **Third Reading** – The term designating when the final vote on a bill is being taken. In the House with its electronic voting system, it may take 30 seconds to conduct the Third Reading. The Senate still operates on an oral roll call voting process where Third Reading may last for ten minutes or more.

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:

- Broadband Internet Map
- Psilocybin
- Free School Meals

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

5. Budgets Due Out in March

Normally this section would be dedicated to bill hearings this week, but with the House and Senate in session and voting on bills until March 8th, there are no committee meetings. Instead, this section is dedicated to looking ahead to what is coming up in the month of March.

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council will release its next forecast on March 20th. This is the entity that everyone in Olympia looks to for the gold-plated standard in economic predictions. Between now and then, budget writers will start assembling draft proposals waiting to know exactly how much will be in the coffers. An unknown factor weighing on the budget this year is the income from the Climate Commitment Act. February 28 is the date for the first carbon auction, from which the income will be partially dedicated to funding natural resources.



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