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# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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## WACD Legislative Update

April 03, 2023

This is WACD's twelfth week of legislative updates for 2023. While the headlines feature the operating, capital, and transportation budget proposals, much work still must be accomplished this session as the clock winds down. Since today is also the NCAA Men's Tournament Championship in basketball, a good point of reference is to think of this time period as halfway through the second half. Though there is still a lot of time left on the clock, you'd rather be the team with the lead!

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### 1. FY23-25 Budget

The Conservation Commission released [their summary](#) last Thursday of the House and Senate proposals for the FY23-25 Operating and Capital Budgets. We encourage you to look at their excellent breakdown if you haven't already. They managed to turn several thousand pages of budget language into an understandable document. These proposals will serve as the basis for negotiations of what will ultimately fund the state government through June 30, 2025.

### 2. WACD Reconciliation Budget Priorities

Amidst the excitement that comes with this year's budget, WACD is still advocating in the Legislature on behalf of our membership. Executive Director Tom Salzer sent a [letter to the primary budget writers](#) this afternoon, highlighting two high-priority items in the budget. Feel free to use this letter as a template if you want your legislators to be aware of these concerns:

- The \$10 million for Conservation Technical Assistance listed in the Senate's Operating Budget should be funded on an ongoing basis and not in one-time funding.
- The \$40 million in the Senate's Operating Budget for riparian restoration projects would better serve Washington State by being in the Capital Budget so project implementation is not limited to the next two years.

### 3. Legislative Overview

Last week, WACD Lobbyist Brynn Brady detailed the major spending items in the proposed Senate Operating and Capital Budget. This week she tackles the House's

versions of the same budgets, as well as the FY 23-25 Transportation Budget. You can [read her full review on the WACD Hub website](#).

#### 4. Legislative Watch List

April 4th is another legislative cut-off, where all bills must be advanced out of their assigned fiscal committees or be left behind for the remaining twenty days of the session. Eleven bills on [WACD's Watch List](#) have not yet cleared this hurdle, including SB 5353 (allowing re-enrollment in the Voluntary Stewardship Program).

#### 5. Reconciliation

Between April 5th and April 23rd (the last day of session), if you turn the channel to TVW and keep hearing the words "concur" or "recede," you are watching the House and Senate engaging in reconciliation of potential legislation. It is a very ceremonial process used by the two chambers when they have adopted different versions of the same bill, like a waltz when both dance partners know the steps but still must follow proper protocol to come into alignment. Only bills where the exact same language is approved by both chambers are sent to the Governor's desk, so synchronous movement is important no matter who leads or who follows.



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