



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Week 7 Legislative Update

February 19, 2024

Welcome to Day 43 of the legislative session. 'Tis the season (for budgets) as the Senate announced their proposed capital budget last Thursday, their proposed operating budget on Sunday, and the House shared their versions released Monday afternoon. With many constituents taking advantage of the federal holiday to meet with their legislators, it was a busy day in Olympia.

Continuing our practice to consolidate during this short but busy session, WACD is keeping all our [2024 Advocacy](#) information in one place. On that page you will be able to view past Legislative Newsletters and our bill tracker, among other resources. If there are additional ways WACD can be of service to our membership during session, all you have to do is pick up the phone or write to [Tom](#), [Heather](#), or [Ryan](#)

1. CTA in Supplemental Budget

Good news first, the House budget includes \$3.5 million for CTA in their operating budget proposal. Bad news, the Senate's budget does not. Our lobbyist is working with Senators to see how best this funding can be incorporated by the Ways & Means committee and what messaging strategy WACD needs to employ. Stay tuned.

To ensure the message reached the committee members today, Executive Director Tom Salzer testified in front of the committee Monday evening about the important of CTA. We've also reached out to a few select districts so that they know to speak to their legislators who sit on this committee. We are seeking for the funding to be included by the time the committee votes on Wednesday. That way, our members don't have to wait

for the reconciliation process to know if this funding will be available for FY25.

We are waiting for the Commission's official budget communique to districts before determining what additional actions might be required.

2. Legislative General Review

As part of her services, WACD's Lobbyist Brynn Brady writes a general review of major legislative topics covering the previous week. We share it with our membership so you are informed of non-district topics that are being discussed in Olympia. You can find her update on the [WACD Hub](#) breaking down highlights from this fast paced legislative session.

This week's review discusses the Senate's focuses in their supplemental budget proposals, the "House of Origin" bills heard last Tuesday, and the announcement that three of the Restore Washington initiatives will receive hearings at the end of the month.

3. Bills yet to clear the hurdle

Wednesday, Feb 21 is another legislative cut-off, all bills must be voted out of their policy committee. Here are some of the bills from [our bill tracker](#) that are currently **not** scheduled for a committee vote (as of Monday night):

- [HB 2023](#) Improving meaningful access to elections by increasing language assistance.
- [SB 5818](#) Authorizing an exemption to the seashore conservation area for a qualified infrastructure project.
- [SB 6150](#) Extending the comprehensive plan revision schedule for select local governments.

3. Committee Testimony This Week

Some bills are coming down to the wire, requiring a public hearing as well as a vote before Wednesday's cut off. Here are the the bills from our watch list that our membership may be interested in testifying on in committee:

- [SB 5972](#) Concerning the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. (Scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources at 10:30 AM

on February 20)

- [SB 5667](#) Concerning eligibility, enrollment, and compensation of small forestland owners volunteering for participation in the forestry riparian easement program. (Scheduled for executive session in the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources at 8:00 AM on February 21)
- [HB 2434](#) Eliminating the fish and wildlife commission in order to redirect efforts towards fishing and hunting culture for tribal and nontribal persons. (Scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources at 8:00 AM on February 21)

4. Budget Process in the last 16 Days

You read that title correctly, there are only sixteen days left in the 2024 legislative session. For those who are interested, here is expected schedule for the budget bills over the remainder of Session.

By Wednesday/Thursday, both the House and Senate committees will pass out their respective budgets out of committee. Voting by the full chamber will likely happen over the weekend, with the remainder of session spent reconciling the differences between the House and Senate versions of bills. It is typically the last bill passed by both chambers on the last day of session, coming as close at 11:58 PM one year on *Sine Die*.

5. WACD's Legislative Priority Sheet

If you are looking for an overview of WACD's budget and policy priorities this session you can find our legislative priority sheet [here](#).

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"Mountains in Winter Sunrise", courtesy of [WSCC's Flickr account](#),
a treat for those who read to the bottom of the page.

Photo by Andrew Phay, Whatcom CD



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