



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Week 8 Legislative Update

February 26, 2024

We are in the penultimate week of the legislature, as next Thursday March 7th is the final day of the legislative session. While it may be the final stretch, a lot of work still needs to occur before the legislature adjourns. In addition to reconciling the House and Senate versions of the Operating, Capital, and Transportation supplemental budgets many bills needed to iron out their differences as well. It is not always an easy process, bills die every year despite being passed by both chambers because the sides couldn't come together.

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. Reconciliation Priorities

Over the weekend, the House and Senate approved their respective versions of the supplemental operating and capital budgets. Budget negotiating teams are assembling to reconcile those differences, and whatever these small groups of legislators agree to will be largely accepted as the "final budget".

WACD prefers the House operating version when it comes to funding conservation districts. As mentioned last week, there is \$3.5 million for CTA in the House operating budget proposal with no funding in the Senate version. Additionally, the House funded the Commission's request for six new FTE's while the Senate only funded two

positions. If you want to see the full breakdown of the competing versions done by Commission staff, click [this link here](#).

As per the membership's vote on Resolution 2023-17 in Wenatchee to support the Commission's 2024 budget request, WACD will be communicating with the negotiators our memberships support for the \$3.5 million and support for the Commission's operational funding. Feel free to reach out to your own legislators as well.

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 announced retirements and legislators running for new political offices, initiative hearings in the legislature, and the differences between the House and Senate supplemental budgets.

3. Legislative Cut-Off

Today, Monday Feb 26 is another legislative cut-off, all bills must be voted out of a financial impact committee by today if the policy comes with a fiscal impact. Going forward, the full House and Senate will be meeting to pass out bills in their body that originated in the other chamber (for example, House bills will be debated by the Senate). Any bills agreed to by both bodies will go on to the Governor's Desk, while bills with differences will need to be reconciled.

[Our bill tracker](#) contains twenty-three policy bills that have made it this far, with one that's already on to the Governor's Desk. [HB 2293](#) (Studying the effects of avian predation of salmon) is the first bill on our tracker to be passed by both the legislature with unanimous votes by both chambers.

4. Initiative Public Testimony This Week

As mentioned in our lobbyist's report last week, three of the six initiatives sent to the legislature earlier this year will be heard by joint committees this week. For anyone

interested, here is the committee schedule. You can watch all the committee hearings on TVW.

- [I-2111](#) would prohibit an income tax. A public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 27 starting at 12:30 PM.
- [I-2081](#) would establish certain parental rights in public school education. The public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 28 starting at 8 a.m.
- [I-2113](#): would expand the list for authorizing police vehicle pursuits. The public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 28, starting at 9 AM.

5. Thinking about 2025 Legislative Session

WACD is already thinking about the 2025 legislative session, though 2024's has not ended yet. As per adopted resolution, WACD is planning a spring legislative meeting with our membership in Ellensburg and online to begin preparing for the next biennium budget and policy priorities.

We will offer more details as they are available, but please hold your calendars for May 29-30.

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"Last Chance", courtesy of [WSCC's Flickr account](#),
a treat for those who read to the bottom of the page.
Photo by Becky Drenner, Okanogan CD



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