



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Week 10 Legislative Update

March 11, 2024

Congratulations everyone for riding the 2024 session rollercoaster. We hope these weekly emails were helpful for our membership. That they provided a good balance of information on WACD's activities, legislative proposals, and opportunities for districts to participate.

This will be the final legislative newsletter of the year. If you have any feedback or suggestions for 2025 while they're still fresh in your mind, all you have to do is pick up the phone or write to [Tom](#), [Heather](#), or [Ryan](#).

1. WACD Budget Wins

WACD reported last week, and it was [confirmed by the Commission](#), that \$3.5 million will be allocated to Conservation Technical Assistance for districts in FY25. Additionally, the Commission will be able to hire two additional staff and (via agency request) be allowed to use state funds to support landowners for one year if they've been disenrolled in FSA's CREP program.

That new CTA money is a solid win, representing the first time districts received an increase in this area during a short session. WACD pushed hard for it knowing it was the top priority of our member-districts, and would likely be the measure of success for the 2024 session. It was truly an association-wide effort, over a sustained period of time. Districts kept their legislators informed about the need for technical assistance in their community during the interim and during Legislative Day. Meanwhile WACD worked early in the session with the House and Senate agriculture committee members to secure their support for CTA funding and, later in the session, with the budget

writers. We hope with this funding, more district projects can be put on the ground.

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.

Her review this week shares an list of announced legislative retirements, information on supplemental budgets, and the proscribed schedule for gubernatorial action to sign or veto bills.

3. Budget Items from Other Agencies

Reviewing the other natural resource agency supplemental budgets, here are some funding items that may interest our member-districts:

- 2 FTE's for the Department of Ecology to "enhance data evaluation, engage coastal communities, and facilitate collaboration with federal and Tribal entities on potential offshore wind development projects"
- \$10 million for Department of Natural Resources for "forest treatments in areas where they have the greatest potential to prevent wildfires and protect air quality"
- \$72 million for Recreation & Conservation Office for various restoration capital project accounts.

4. Tracking Governor Bill Action

Now that the legislature has left town, attention will shift across the capitol campus to the Governor's Mansion. There is a twenty day time limit from adjournment for Governor Inslee sign or veto legislation, though Sundays are not counted. You can track his bill actions at governor.wa.gov.

5. Legislation for 2025

Next year will see the start of a completely new legislative term, a blank slate with new faces and new proposals. But many of the proposals from our [2024 bill tracker](#) that did not make it all the way this time will be re-introduced next year. Here are a few we will be tracking over the interim:

- [HB 1935](#) - Promoting resource conservation practices that include student education and leadership opportunities in public schools.
- [HB 1971](#) - Concerning a rangeland fire protection association pilot project.
- [HB 2330](#) - Addressing wildfire protection and mitigation.
- [SB 5846](#) - Concerning beaver ecosystem management.
- [SB 5921](#) - Concerning tribal representation on the state conservation commission.



"Cairn - Olympia Coast", courtesy of [WSCC's Flickr account](#),
a treat for those who read to the bottom of the page.

Photo by Christine Cooley, Pierce CD



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