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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Week 2 Legislative Update

January 13, 2026

Welcome to the start of the legislative session. There are sixty days between now and the end of the legislative session. Between now and then will come many proposals, many conversations, and hopefully very few sleepless nights.

Right now, there are 120 bills on the [WACD bill tracker](#). By the end of the year perhaps 15% of these proposals will become law. Each bill will be a metaphorical salmon, fighting upstream.

We hope these emails will be of use and benefit to our members as we collectively navigate the new legislative session. If there are additional ways WACD can be of service to our membership during session, or want to ask about anything you see in one of these newsletters, all you have to do is pick up the phone or write to [Tom](#), [Heather](#), or [Ryan](#)

1. CD Lands Bill Committee Hearing

WACD learned today that [HB 2154](#), the bill to par CDs from purchasing ag lands, is scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday morning at 8 AM in the House Committee on Local Government. WACD sent out an email to our membership that we plan to testify against the bill, and try to refocus the conversation on the estimated 165,000 acres lost each year to land conversion in Washington State. Districts who wish to testify should consider highlighting the pressures of development and the loss of ag land in their community.

2. Testifying Options

As a refresher, there several different ways to testify as part of the committee process. Any individual can speak directly to the committee in Olympia, or testify remotely. You can testify either for the bill, against it, or take an "other" position on the bill. Depending on the number of individuals, there may be a time limit. But unless several hundred people will to speak on a bill, you are almost guaranteed the opportunity to speak.

There are alternatives to public speaking, such as the ability to submit written testimony that is distributed to every legislator on the committee. Another alternative is to have a position noted for the legislative record, it is becoming common practice for the committee chair to note the number of people who signed up for or against each bill.

Take a moment and explore the [legislative sign-up website](#).

3. Upcoming Committee Meetings

One common feature in these newsletters will be to identifying opportunities in the committee process we think our membership might to participate or observe on TVW. Here's a few items from this first week of the legislative session, in addition to the bill on CD purchases of ag lands:

- [SB 5903](#) - Concerning cemetery district elections will be heard in the Senate Local Government Committee at 1:30 on Thursday, January 15.
- Also at 1:30 on the 15 will be work sessions in the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on Columbia River basin water supply and Marine Resources Advisory Counsels.
- The House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee will be doing a work session and hear presentations on "forest and fish law overview" at 10:30 on Thursday, January 16.

4. Legislative Day Extension

WACD has extended our sign-up for Legislative Day for another week to help coordinate district engagement with the legislative process. We are asking districts this year to fill out [a short form](#) by **January 16th** so we know how many meals to prepare, which districts want WACD to make their legislative appointments for February 10, and which CDs are wanting to showcase their outreach materials for legislators.

Note ~ with the half day SCC budget development meeting the day before Legislative Day and the Ombuds workgroup meeting the day after, please book your rooms early in case we need to add to the hotel room block.

5. Legislative Lunches

Thank you to everyone to came to our first Legislative Lunch. Hopefully those who came found value in spending part of your lunch hour talking about the legislative process, district elections, testifying on bills, and HB 2154.

And if you didn't attend, don't worry! One commitment WACD is making to have that conversation be entirely optional, all the information WACD is sharing there is sent out through the 5T or these Legislative Updates. These chats are to respond to the request from our membership for more direct engagement on legislative topics. So come and ask questions, discuss what's going on, and how to participate in the legislative process. You can reach out to [Ryan](#) for a calendar invite or follow [this link](#) to download the events.



"Goat Smiles", courtesy of [WSCC's Flickr account](#), as a treat for those who reached the bottom of the page.

Taken by Kaci Bartkowski, Central Klickitat Conservation District



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