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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Week 5 Legislative Update

February 03, 2026

Welcome to the fourth week of the legislative session. This week, kernels will be separated from the chaff. The first big legislative cut-off, when bills must come out of their policy committee, is February 4th. This is just the first of many cut-offs built into the legislative process, to ensure only the most important and the most urgent bills make it to the Governor's desk.

Amidst the constant changes, we hope we are keeping our membership informed of the latest happenings in Olympia between the [WACD bill tracker](#), these newsletters, and our [Legislative Lunches](#),

We hope these emails will be of use and benefit to our members. 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 Elections Bill

The CD election bill was heard in the House State Government committee, and If you didn't watch Tuesday's bill hearing on HB 2499, we encouraged you to watch both the [legislator testimony](#) and the [public testimony](#). It was confusing to say the least, with a [proposed substitute bill](#) offered at the start of the committee hearing, and with public testimony limited to only one minute per person.

The bill is scheduled for a vote on Tuesday, February 3rd in the committee's 1:30 hearing. We don't know for certain how Tuesday will go, though we suspect the bill will

be voted out of committee. Any amendments to the bill would be filed under the [committee's webpage](#) at some point before the start of the meeting on Tuesday.

2. Next Steps

If HB 2499 is passed by the State Government Committee, the likelihood is that the bill will be assigned to the House Appropriations Committee where the bill sponsor is a Vice Chair. That gives her additional opportunities to influence the bill's course, and the conversation shifts to a discussion of the fiscal impact of the bill.

If the bill is put up for a public hearing, it would be the last opportunity for WACD and CDs to speak publicly to the bill before the bill eventually reaches a vote in front of the full House of Representatives. WACD would then seek a large contingency of districts and supervisors to testify on the bill, to bring a full showing of the numbers in front of the Appropriations Committee.

While we work, it is important to be aware that WACD is consciously trying to keep this bill from being split amongst party lines. If the bill becomes politicized and we're being supported by the minority, the numbers game works against us.

3. Legislative Day Briefing and Training

WACD arranges a Legislative Day each year for districts interested in coming to Olympia during the legislative session. WACD helps out district with meeting materials, arranging appointments, and background information. There is also a briefing at the breakfast on the morning of February 10th.

This year, WACD is hosting a virtual [briefing and training](#) for engaging with legislators and communicating information from 12 - 1 tomorrow Tuesday, February 3rd. If you've never met with your legislators before, or want to brush up on those skills, please consider attending. We will be going through the best ways to raise your priorities, share the purpose and value of conservation districts, and be done in the space of a 15 minute meeting.

4. Threatened by Policy Cut-off

Here's a few bills from the [WACD Bill Tracker](#) who are **not** scheduled for a vote before Wednesday's cut-off.

- [HB 1825](#) (Concerning grizzly bear management.) was scheduled for a vote on Jan 14th in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. The vote did not occur, nor has it been rescheduled.
- [HB 2316](#) (Concerning land use development when vegetation associated with shrubsteppe is present in the urban growth areas.) was heard in the House Local Government Committee on Jan 20th.
- [HB 2154](#) (Concerning land ownership by conservation districts.) is not scheduled for a vote in the House Local Government Committee.
- [HB 2620](#) (Restoring collaboration in the forest practices rule-making process for the benefit of long-term protection of natural resources and the forest products industry.) is scheduled for a hearing on Feb 3 in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee but is not scheduled for a vote.

5. Lobbyist Update

One service our lobbyist Brynn Brady provides is coverage of the legislative highlights and trends from the week. From the third week of the legislative session Brynn covers some of the bills that would change grocery store operations as well as bill hearings on tax exemptions and artificial intelligence. Check out her write-up on the [WACD HUB](#).



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

Taken by Lindsay Chutas, Spokane Conservation District



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