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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Week 7 Legislative Update

February 17, 2026

Welcome to the sixth week of the legislative session. While President's Day may be government holiday, the state legislature is in session. And today is in fact one of the busiest days of the legislative calendar, because many people who have the day off will come to Olympia to meet with their legislators. Five major advocacy groups are in Olympia today, along with many more unaffiliated individuals.

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. 2026 Legislative Day

Thank you to everyone who attended Legislative Day this year. We hope all your meetings were worthwhile, and the time spent away from usual activities wasn't too disruptive. WACD appreciated that so many individuals made the trip to Olympia.

Don't forget to follow-up with a short thank you note to the offices you met with, it is another opportunity to remind them of your meeting and the priorities of your district. If you want to sent material to offices, WACD has a number of handout options on the [Advocacy tab](#) of the WACD Hub.

2. When a Door Closes...

After spending a few weeks focusing on the many ways a bill can die in the legislature via different legislative cut-offs, it seemed apropos to mention ways that a policy or budget proposals can continue forward after a bill fails a legislative hurdle. This happens to very few bills each session but it is good to be aware that options still exist.

The main method available to budget proposals are legislative provisos. This is one-time funding written into the budget bill, rather than adopted through the legislature. This is the main path forward for a bill like [SB 5893](#), to have their policy goal funded for one year with the hope of getting new funding in future budgets. The other main method are bills that are deemed "Necessary to Implement the Budget" by the majority party. Any bill can be given that designation, but typically proposals that would raise new revenue can be made exempt from the regular legislative process.

3. Committee Hearing Schedule

On Wednesday, February 18th, House and Senate committees will resume their regular meeting schedule for one week. All policy committees will have seven days to hold public testimony and vote on bills received from the other chamber.

Here are some bill hearings our membership might be interested in viewing on TVW, with more to be scheduled after the committee chairs know what bills made it passed Tuesday's cut-off:

- [SB 5919](#) (Encouraging fire districts and insurance providers to develop voluntary incentives to promote best practices.) will be heard in the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources at 8 AM on Wednesday, February 18th.
- Also being heard in the same House Agriculture & Natural Resources committee hearing is [SB 5838](#) (Adding tribal representation to the board of natural resources.)
- A third bill of note in that Wednesday morning House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee hearing is [SJM 8015](#) (Requesting Congress to ensure that federal wildfire response entities have the capacity to protect communities and infrastructure, limit impacts to natural resources and watersheds, and protect wildland firefighter health and safety.)

4. "House of Origin" Cut-off

Here's a few bills from the [WACD Bill Tracker](#) which still require a vote before Tuesday's cut-off where all bills must be passed out of their chamber of origin (House bills out of the House of Representative):

- [HB 2544](#) (Concerning a pilot process for the upper Columbia water rights adjudication.)
- [HB 2619](#) (Reducing regulatory stress in agriculture.)
- [HB 2661](#) (Establishing the legislative task force on public records act modernization consisting of eight voting members and four nonvoting legislators.)
- [SB 6016](#) (Considering critical aquifer recharge areas when revising an urban growth area.)

5. Lobbyist Update

One service our lobbyist Brynn Brady provides is coverage of the legislative highlights and trends from the week. From the fifth week of the legislative session Brynn continues to highlight the bill hearing known as the "Millionaire's Tax", the upcoming Revenue Forecast Council meeting, and explains the role of the Rules Committee in the legislative process. Check out her write-up on the [WACD HUB](#).



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

Taken by Dean White, Lincoln County Conservation District



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