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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Legislative Update

February 25, 2026

Welcome to the seventh week of the legislative session. Supplemental budget proposals from the House and Senate are now public, which is why this newsletter was delayed a day. Expect an email from the Commission on the overall impact to their budget soon.

You can find all the budget materials at fiscal.wa.gov. Look for the "Latest Budget Proposals" button. The page on the [Senate's operating budget](#) in particular has excellent resources on their proposed [per-agency impact](#), [revenue increases](#), and understanding their [potential approach](#) to the FY25-27 biennium budget.

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. Operating Budget

Our read is that all the readily identifiable impacts to the Conservation Commission are in the FY 27 Supplemental Operating Budget. The Senate's is straightforward and positive, an extra \$1.25 M for Forest Health and Community Wildfire Funding with no cuts to any program. This is the WACD preferred budget.

The House's version is all negative, rescinding the \$1 million in Riparian Grant Program operating funding that was allocated last year as well as reducing the Sustainable Farms and Fields line-item from \$1.5 M to \$750,000 for the next fiscal year.

2. Capital Budget

There are no proposed capital budget changes in the Senate version, and there are no funding reductions in the House version. There are some shifting of funding sources, but no change in the funding levels. If you look at the capital budget and see a proposed reduction in the dollar amounts, it is because districts have spent the dollars and so there's less being carried forward into FY27.

3. Reconciliation Template Letter

WACD has already [contacted](#) the House Appropriations Committee with our request to change their budget proposal before their vote on Wednesday, in case budget writers are willing to consider amendments. Usually that is not the case though and the House and the Senate will move very quickly, both chambers will likely vote on the operating, capital, and transportation budgets by Friday.

The two legislative bodies will start to reconcile the differences between their budgets at that point, and this is where there is an **opportunity for districts**. WACD has developed a [template letter](#) to customize and share with your legislators by March 10th about the impacts of the proposed cuts or increases to the Riparian Grant Program, Sustainable Farms & Fields, and Forest Health funding would have to your local communities. WACD will also be working through our lobbyist to get the Senate's version in the final budget.

4. "Opposite Policy" Cut-off

Here's are the two bills from the [WACD Bill Tracker](#) which are not scheduled for a vote before Wednesday's deadline where all bills must be passed out of the policy committee in the opposite chamber (House bills out of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee):

- [HJM 4004](#) (Requesting Congress to modify the Marine Mammal Protection Act.)
- [SB 5360](#) (Concerning environmental crimes.)

5. Lobbyist Update

One service our lobbyist Brynn Brady provides is coverage of the legislative highlights and trends from the week. From the sixth week of the legislative session Brynn sketches out the timeline for the adoption of supplemental budgets, the Senate's vote on the "Millionaire's Tax", and some high profile legislative proposals that died last week. Check out her write-up on the [WACD HUB](#).



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

Taken by Alexis Bryson, Whatcom Conservation District



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