



Legislative Report

July 3, 2013-21

The Legislative Report is a weekly report that is distributed each Friday throughout the legislative session. Each edition includes an update of legislative activities as well as a list of specific legislative meetings of interest to ports. Copies of bills can be found on the Legislature's web site at www.leg.wa.gov.

2013 Legislature at A Glance

Length: 30 days; 2nd Special Session began on June 12 and adjourned on June 29.

Information:

- For up-to-date legislative information, visit www.leg.wa.gov.
- To listen to a legislative hearing, visit www.tvw.org.
- For both current and previous copies of the Legislative Report, visit www.washingtonports.org

Advocacy

The Legislative Report is distributed each Friday throughout the legislative session. Each edition includes an update of legislative activities as well as a list of specific legislative meetings of interest to ports. Each report concludes with Bill Tracking, a section offering brief descriptions of proposed legislation and noting where that legislation is currently located in the bill process. For easy access, the bills are directly linked to their posting on the Legislature's website.

WPPA representatives Eric Johnson, Ginger Eagle and Johan Hellman are following a wide-variety of issues throughout the session. If you have

2nd Special Session Final Report . . . we hope . . .

The Legislature finally passed a two-year operating budget Friday evening which was described in our legislative report last week. On Saturday, they passed a capital budget, and adjourned and left town, narrowly averting a government shutdown and without the Senate taking any action on a transportation revenue package. However, there were rumors that the governor might consider bringing the legislature back for another special session in September to work on transportation revenue.

The WPPA staff would like to thank everyone who diligently read every one of our legislative reports this year... all 20 of them (21 if you read this one). While we're certain you'll miss reading the scintillating news each week, we can assure you that we will not miss trying to give logical explanations to the action, inaction, and various antics of the legislature over the past 153 days of legislative session.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the final capital budget, the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) was funded with a total of \$9 million dollars for the 2013-15 biennium. However, there was a proviso added to that funding that allows CERB to use it for certain projects that differ from current projects that receive CERB loans. The proviso language specifies that the projects that may be funded are ones that revitalize existing retail, industrial, or commercial properties located within incorporated areas. The properties must have either been abandoned, or have more than 70% of their square footage vacant. They still have to show convincing evidence that private development is ready to occur, and consideration must be given to the following factors: the project's value to the community including evidence of support from local businesses and government; the project's feasibility; a commitment of

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matching funds; whether the project offers a health insurance plan for employees and that includes an option for dependents of employees; and the project's readiness to proceed.

Additionally, the capital budget included about \$42 million in grants for "jobs and economic development." Unfortunately \$7.1 million of that was transferred from the account that funds CERB, so most of the funds that CERB would otherwise receive in loan repayments and interest, is diverted to this grant program. And, these funds are only for a specific project list the legislature created, with most of it going to cities. However, the Port of Moses Lake was provided with \$300,000 for a firefighting system, and the Port of Everett received \$1.5 million for their roll-on roll-off cargo berth

ENVIRONMENT

In a year when legislators balanced the state budget by diverting funds from the Public Works Trust Fund (which pays for bridges and other infrastructure) even as the state's bridges are literally collapsing, the treatment of dedicated funds was questionable going into the final week of special session.

With regard to MTCA, our best estimates were further complicated by passage of SB 5296, Sen. Ericksen's MTCA reform bill which establishes a new Environmental Legacy Stewardship Account ("ELSA") to fund environmental projects.

In the end, ports fared well in the construction budget – with one major exception. First, the good news: the budget provides \$4.5 million in ELSA funds for derelict vessel removal and deconstruction; it fully funds the Puget Sound and Eastern Washington toxic cleanup initiatives; and, it provides \$2.5 million to fund stormwater projects at the Port of Bellingham. These are all major successes, worthy of recognition.

The one major exception regards Remedial Action Grants ("RAG" grants) funded through the Local Toxics Control Account. Throughout session, legislators from both sides of the aisle gave passionate floor speeches about "increasing the number of toxic sites that can be cleaned" in our state.

Following this theme, ports requested \$71.5 million for RAG grants this session, an amount that was reflected in budget proposals put forward by both the Senate and by former Gov. Gregoire in her final budget. Yet, when the final budget was passed, legislators went with the lower amount of \$62.5 million reflected in the original House proposal.

Arguably, it could have been a lot worse. And if you had to give it a letter grade, the legislature would get a solid "B" on this year's allocation for cleanups. Still, in a year when so much was made about

fully funding cleanups, it is a huge disappointment that the final allocation fell short. For the ports that need to delay cleanups as a result, the effect is devastating.

An effort is already underway to receive additional supplemental funds next session in order to make up for the decreased allocation this year. In the meantime, we are hopeful that Ecology will successfully begin implementing the tools and strategies in SB 5296 aimed at bringing cleanup projects to completion more quickly. And so begins the first day of the next legislative session.

TRANSPORTATION

To the dismay of a broad coalition of labor, local government, business and environmental groups, no transportation revenue package was adopted by the legislature. Although the House did pass a 10.5 cent gas tax, coupled with weight and other vehicle fees, the Senate did not take up the measure.

In the final analysis, after six months of work all of the parties involved in the transportation revenue discussion ended up exactly where they started: the House and Governor wanted action, and the Senate preferred to wait. Key areas of disagreement were 1) whether the package needed to be voter-approved, 2) how much money to spend on transit, and 3) the design of the Columbia River Crossing bridge replacement project.

The only silver lining in this cloud is that after this debate, more elected officials know about the critical need for transportation investment. This need remains, and we must continue to show legislators and citizens the importance of freight investments to our state economy.

Office Locations of Statewide Officials

Governor's Office: Gov. Jay Inslee's office is located on the second floor of the Capitol (or Legislative) Building.

Lieutenant Governor's Office: Lt. Gov. Brad Owen's office is located on the second floor of the Capitol (or Legislative) Building.

Auditor's Office: State Auditor Troy Kelley's office is located in the Sunset Life Building, 3200 Capitol Blvd. S., Olympia.

Secretary of State's Office: Secretary of State Kim Wyman's office is located on the second floor of the Capitol (or Legislative) Building.

State Treasurer: State Treasurer Jim McIntire's office is located on the second floor of the Capitol or Legislative Building.

Insurance Commissioner: Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler's office is located in the Insurance 5000 Building, 5000 Capitol Blvd., Olympia.

How to Find your Legislator and Contact Them:

- **Senate:** <http://www.leg.wa.gov/Senate>
- **House:** <http://www.leg.wa.gov/House>

How to Access a Bill:

- <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>

Here you can enter the bill number you are looking for or even search for it by entering a subject keyword. You can save the bill, print the bill or just check its status and track it as it progresses through the Legislature.

How to Watch or Listen to a Hearing:

- TVW – cable television <http://www.tvw.org/tvguide>
- TVW - webcast – <http://www.tvw.org/media/liveevents.cfm>
- In Person - Floor Calendar - <http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/calendar/>

INTERNET

www.leg.wa.gov. Here you will find contact information for each legislator and their staff; legislative leadership; committees and their staff and current agendas; floor calendars; the most up-to-date bill information and much more.

www.tvw.org provides coverage of floor debates, committee hearings and other public policy events. Also included is a weekly news comment program. Coverage is available through REAL Networks or Windows Media both in real time or as archived. Follow the site's instructions for access.

TELEVISION

TVW is a cable network the Legislature created to cover activities of both houses with live programming and delayed telecasts of each day's events. The week's programming can be found on their website, www.tvw.org.

The Washington Public Ports Association staff in Olympia is also here to assist you in getting information and we're happy to walk you through any of the above. Please feel free to call us 360-943-0760 if you have any questions.