

**WEEK 1 REPORT ON 2020 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE
FOR WRPA EXECUTIVE BOARD, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE, & MEMBERSHIP**

Doug Levy – 1/21/2020

Reminder – Don't Forget to Register for Parks and Great Outdoors Day on Feb. 6! If you haven't already registered, it's not too late! We would love your energy, your voice, and your presence on Thursday, Feb. 6, when WRPA and the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition again team up to sponsor a legislative day in Olympia. It will start with a morning briefing, continue with a bushel of meetings, and end with an evening reception sponsored by WWRC at the Governor's Mansion. To learn more and register:

<https://wildliferecreation.org/events/legislative-day-2020/>

With customary "State of the State" remarks, a not-so-customary speech by a history-making Speaker of the House, and several hundred new bills being introduced in the Senate and House, the 2020 Session of the Legislature got off to a running start in its first week.

The feature event of the swearings-in on Monday (Jan. 13) was the ceremony for Rep. Laurie Jinkins (D-Tacoma/27th Dist.), the first female Speaker ever and the first openly gay legislator to assume this leading place of power in the State House. As we look to see what track record Speaker Jinkins builds in her first 60 days, her powerful first-day speech is worth a read:

<https://housedemocrats.wa.gov/jinkins/2020/01/13/speaker-laurie-jinkins-opening-day-remarks-1-13-2020/>

A day after Jinkins rose to the podium, Governor Inslee gave his "State of the State" remarks, where he touched on everything from the late William Ruckelshaus to homelessness to his proposal for a Clean Fuel Standard in the State of Washington: https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/speeches/2020-StateoftheState.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Aside from that, Week 1 was about bills (*lots of them – the Senate and House are well over 1,000 thus far*), budgets (*the typical hearings on the Governor's proposed Operating, Capital, and Transportation Budgets*), and a sense of some high-profile issues on the 2020 docket: affordable housing and homelessness; facial recognition technology; gun control; and more.

Local governments rolled out a transportation funding options bill in Week 1, continued preparation of economic development bills, and started the 60-day sprint to keep pace of all that legislation impacting us.

For WRPA, Week 1 will go down as a very good one, as our local funding options bill was both introduced and set for a public hearing.

Here is my overview of WRPA priorities and support items, followed by a bulletized rundown of some other legislation impacting local parks and recreation and the outdoors. I've separately attached a Week 13 hearings list and recommendations regarding testimony, signing in, or simply monitoring the pile o' bills 😊

Top Priorities

Provide Local Parks and Recreation Agencies with new Funding Options to Address Vital M&O and Preservation Needs and to Enhance Economic Development: (*Policy/Fiscal Bill*) We now have a bill number and a hearing date for our local parks funding options bill. **House Bill 2625**, prime-sponsored by Rep. Carolyn Eslick (R-Sultan/39th Dist.), is up for a hearing Wednesday at 8 a.m. in the House Local Government Committee. My sincere thanks to Jennifer Burbidge of Lacey, Mike Farrell of Monroe, Candice

Bock of the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), and Poulsbo contract lobbyist Bryan McConaughy, all of whom plan to join me in testifying in support of our legislation. In the Senate, we are awaiting a Senate Local Government Committee hearing on what is known as a “Striking Amendment” to **Substitute Senate Bill 5680** which will make that bill a companion to the current **HB 2625**.

Strongly Support \$50,000 Allocation to Update Outdoor Recreation Sector Economic Analysis

(Operating Budget) It’s not too often that you get a pre-Session win on your priority issues – but that’s the case with this one! WRPA had teamed up with over a dozen other organizations, urging that the Governor’s 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget include a \$50,000 appropriation to update the outdoor recreation economic-impact study first released in January 2015. As a result of REI Inc. and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) contributing funds, this is a done deal. Wahoo! The Tacoma-based firm of Earth Economics will be leading this update of the study that first showed the outdoor recreation sector generated nearly \$22 billion a year in economic activity and some 200,000 jobs across the state.

Protect Funding for Dedicated Accounts within the Capital Budget

(Capital Budget) It is our fervent hope that this will be little more than a ‘stay vigilant’ issue for the short Session, as we do not expect the Legislature to do any major re-racking of the Capital Budget. We will, however, stay attuned to any potential changes or twists and turns.

“Support/Oppose” Items

Efforts to Address Mental Health, Homelessness, Affordable Housing

(Policy Bills, Budgetary Items) In 2020, WRPA plans to strongly support efforts led by cities and counties, the Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA), and others to ensure there are ongoing tools to address a growing list of mental health, homelessness, and affordable housing challenges in our local communities. There’s a long list of bills in this issue area – here are a few to get you started:

- ✓ **Governor-request legislation extending the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program – SB 6411/HB 2620:** This Governor-request legislation is one that cities and urban counties are likely to *support*, though it will no doubt morph and go through some revisions as it winds its way through the legislative process. A coalition of cities, developers, Realtors, and others are seeking changes to the bill. **6411** will be heard Wednesday in the Senate Housing Stability & Affordability Committee.
- ✓ **Legislation allowing counties – and cities, if counties do not act – to have a ‘councilmanic’ 1/10th of 1 cent sales tax authority to address affordable housing – HB 1590/SB 6126:** Lawmakers who represent Olympia (Sen. Sam Hunt, D-22nd; Rep. Beth Doglio, D-22nd) are working on this legislation, with **1590** considered the more likely ‘vehicle.’ Whether the Legislature truly has the appetite to approve a councilmanic sales tax authority for affordable housing will be tested again this Session – **1590** and bills like it have languished in prior Sessions.
- ✓ **Legislation allowing cities and counties new access to sales tax (both councilmanic and state sales tax credits) to address homelessness – HB 2658:** The *Seattle Times* carried an interesting Page 1 story Monday noting this legislation by Rep. Drew Stokesbary (R-Auburn/31st Dist.), the lead Republican on the House Appropriations Committee. The Stokesbary bill authorizes a combination of councilmanic sales tax authority, voter-approved sales tax, and state sales tax credits to generate revenue that cities and counties can use for homelessness services. In exchange, they would have to disallow “safe injection sites,” camping, and other things. I’m linking for you both the legislation and the *Times* article – reading it will illustrate the hot-button nature of **2658**:
<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/2658.pdf?q=20200120154801>
<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/as-smaller-washington-cities-grapple-with-homelessness-republicans-take-up-the-issue-in-the-state-legislature/>

Legislation to Ban Sales/Transport of English and Atlantic Ivy in our State

(Policy Bill) The City of Olympia had been prepared to lead – with WRPA in support -- a 2020 legislative effort to ban the sale and transportation of English and Atlantic Ivy in Washington State. It appears now that this will go forward outside the legislative process. I'll keep you posted if that changes!

“Big Tent” Outdoor Recreation Coalition

(Budgetary, Policy Items) WRPA strongly supports the continued work of the “Big Tent” Outdoor Recreation Coalition, an umbrella organization comprised of several dozen outdoor retailers, non-profits, and others that seek to ensure Washington State recognizes and maximizes the economic, societal, tourism, and health benefits of outdoor recreation. The Big Tent is holding policy calls every Friday morning during Session and I will take part in those.

Advocate for Key “Healthy & Active Communities” Funding within the State Budget Process

(Capital, Transportation, Operating Budgets) As part of its ongoing “Healthy and Active Communities” initiative begun several years ago, WRPA will work to ensure **adequate funding of grant programs and budgetary items that help youth and adults to live active and healthy lifestyles**; enhance public health; and combat a growing obesity trend in Washington and across the country. Similar to what I shared with regard to our “no Capital Budget diversions” priority, this is an item where we will stay vigilant to ensure no funding dislocations or diversions with respect to:

- ✓ Public Health District funding -- Operating Budget;
- ✓ Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant, Safe Routes to Schools, and “Complete Streets” funding in the Transportation Budget;
- ✓ Dedicated accounts and grant programs in the Capital Budget such as WWRP, YAF, ALEA, NOVA, BFP.

Support Increased Funding Associated with the “No Child Left Inside” Grant Program

(Operating Budget) Washington State Parks sought an increase of nearly \$1.2 million for NCLI, with the Governor ultimately including \$500,000 in his proposed Operating Budget. WRPA will **support** this.

Support Increase in the Annual Discover Pass Fee from \$30 to \$35

(Policy Bill) While Washington State Parks did *not* receive permission to move forward with an Agency-Request bill on increasing the annual Discover Pass fee, the Chair of the House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans Committee has trotted a bill out there. **HB 2345** by Rep. Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline/32nd Dist.) has not yet been scheduled for public hearing. We will sign in with **support** for this legislation once a hearing is set.

Other Bills WRPA Is Tracking

(NOTE: If you have bills you think we should add, or questions on particular bills impacting local parks and recreation, e-mail me: Doug@outcomesbylevy.onmicrosoft.com)

- **HB 2488, concerning park and recreation district levies:** This bill makes some very technical changes vis-à-vis park district levies and property tax. I've had a few of our smart folks who watch parks and recreation “pro-rationing” and “suppression” issues review **2488** – and it appears to be one we will just stay neutral on. No hearing has been scheduled yet.
- **SB 6252/HB 2601, authorizing the State Parks & Recreation Commission to enter into longer-term leases without a unanimous vote:** This bill changes current law requiring a unanimous vote when the Commission wishes to establish leases of more than 20 years. **6252/2601** changes the threshold to a majority-vote, and also extends the maximum lease term from 50 to 80 years. No hearing has been scheduled yet.
- **Bills dealing with All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Off-Road-Vehicle (ORV) Registrations, Etc.:** There are a bunch of these – so forgive me if I leave any out! **SB 6114/HB 2243** gives cities under 3,000 population and counties more leeway to designate roads as suitable for ORV use; **SB 6115/HB 2243** eliminates, under certain conditions, the registration exemption for out-of-state ORVs;

SB 6363/HB 2592 allows ATVs to also be registered as snowmobiles; and **HB 2447** enables new categories of off-road vehicles entering the market to be labeled as wheeled ATVs. Most of these bills – with the exception of **2447** – either have had or are scheduled to have hearings this week.

- **SSB 5692/2SHB 1708, Fishing and Hunting License Fees:** This legislation was the subject of a spirited 2019 Session debate between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and sport-fishing interests. Whether the bill includes simply the fee increases sought by WDFW, or other concessions sought by the sport-fishing sector in exchange, will be an interesting one to watch.
- **SB 6208/HB 2358, allowing bicyclists to yield at stop signs when no other traffic is present or approaching:** These companion bills by Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig (D-Spokane/3rd Dist.) and Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon (D-Burien/34th Dist.) will be heard this afternoon (Tuesday) and Wednesday afternoon in the Senate and House Transportation Committees. The legislation allows a bicyclist to treat a stop sign as a yield if no other traffic is approaching – though a stop would still be required at all times at railroad crossings. Washington Bikes is promoting this bill and has data showing that it enhances overall safety and has been adopted in four states. The law enforcement community has mixed feelings. Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) is signing in opposed.
- **HB 2371, concerning authority of counties to vacate a county road abutting a body of water if the road is hazardous or creates a significant public safety risk:** For the past two Sessions, Sen. Ann Rivers (R-La Center/18th Dist.) has attempted to pass this bill; Rep. Paul Harris (R-Vancouver/17th Dist.) takes up the mantle this Session. A North Clark County roadway is at the epicenter of this legislative initiative; some outdoor groups are nervous about the statewide precedent it could set.
- **HB 2443, requiring the use of Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) in vessels under 19 feet:** Current state law requires that with ‘vessels’ under 19 feet long (the definition is inclusive of motor boats, rafts, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, etc.), those under age 13 must wear a PFD, or life-jacket, at all times when the vessel is underway. **2443** would require the same of *all ages*. Bill sponsor Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline/32nd Dist.) crafted the bill after four (4) stand-up paddleboard fatalities occurred in 2019. The Recreational Boating Association of Washington (RBAW) and the Northwest Marine Trade Association (NMTA) will testify before Rep. Ryu’s House Housing & Community Development Committee with concerns about the breadth of this expansion.
- **HB 2444, invalidating current Boater Education Cards, requiring all boaters to obtain one, and then establishing a 10-year renewal schedule with fee payments:** This bill by Chair Ryu will generate controversy as it changes the whole nature of the Boater Education Card, albeit without requiring kayakers and paddleboarders to obtain one. RBAW and NMTA will line up in opposition to this legislation.
- **HB 2587, establishing a program for the designation of state scenic bikeways:** New 40th District House Member Alex Ramel (D-Bellingham), an avid outdoorsman, is the prime sponsor of this one. It has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.
- **SB 6093, SB 6174, repealing the requirement to have a Discover Pass to visit State Parks and other public lands:** Senate Minority Leader Mark Schoesler (R-Ritzville/9th Dist.) is the prime sponsor of both these bills, neither of which has yet been scheduled for public hearing. The bills express legislative intent that lost Discover Pass revenue will be offset through the state General Fund. It will be interesting to see if the Legislature has the appetite to return to the pre-Discover Pass days that used to exist all the way up until the mid-2000s.