

**WEEK 2 REPORT ON 2020 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE  
FOR WRPA EXECUTIVE BOARD, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE, & MEMBERSHIP**

*Doug Levy – 1/27/2020*

***Yes, it's another reminder – Register for Parks and Great Outdoors Day on Feb. 6!*** Folks, there's still time to register and make your voice heard. We'll gather in Olympia Thursday, Feb. 6, as WRPA and the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition again team up to sponsor a legislative day in Olympia. WRPA also has a panel of activities the day before for those who are interested. To learn more and register:

[https://www.wrpatoday.org/index.php?option=com\\_events&task=icalrepeat.detail&evid=86&Itemid=181&year=2020&month=02&day=06&title=2020-wrpawwrc-legislative-day&uid=3f7ef77172afa9f8cfe346e6bfd5fca](https://www.wrpatoday.org/index.php?option=com_events&task=icalrepeat.detail&evid=86&Itemid=181&year=2020&month=02&day=06&title=2020-wrpawwrc-legislative-day&uid=3f7ef77172afa9f8cfe346e6bfd5fca)

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

In Week 2, the Legislature breezed past opening-day ceremonies and a “State of the State” address and settled into its usual groove of public hearings, Caucus meetings, some early Floor votes, and a robust number of bills. Between the Senate and House, nearly 1,500 bills have been introduced in the first 2+ weeks of Session – not to mention scores of holdover bills from the 2019 Session that can still be acted upon.

It's enough to make your friendly neighborhood lobbyist drown in paper – except there's less of that this Session. In response to new Public Records Act storage and retention requirements the Legislature is now bound by, you will see that many lawmakers' offices are looking to go paperless and seek communications and material via e-mail rather than hard-copy paper. All of you will want to keep this in mind as Parks and Great Outdoors Day draws closer.

Local governments unveiled important economic development bills in the second week of Session, and the Association of Washington Cities prepared for several hundred municipal visitors as part of the “City Action Days” legislative conference scheduled this coming Tuesday and Wednesday.

For WRPA, Week 2 was a terrific one as our local funding options bill sailed through policy committees in both chambers!

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 3 hearings list and recommendations regarding testimony, signing in, or simply monitoring these 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 our priority bill through the Senate and House Local Government committees! The Senate Local Government Committee moved the Striking Amendment to **SB 5680** by Senate Floor Leader Marko Liias (D-Edmonds/21<sup>st</sup> Dist.) on Thursday with only one no vote, while the House Local Government Committee approved **HB 2625** by Rep. Carolyn Eslick (R-Sultan/39<sup>th</sup> Dist.) on Friday with all yes votes and one Member (Rep. Vicki Kraft, R-Vancouver/17<sup>th</sup> Dist.) voting ‘without recommendation.’ The content of these bills is now virtually identical – save for a date typo (2019 instead of 2020) in the Senate version. I want to again thank Mike Farrell of Monroe and Jennifer Burbidge of Lacey, both of whom gave very helpful testimony last Wednesday as **HB 2625** had its House Local Government hearing. Our bills now move forward to the Senate Ways & Means and House Finance committees, respectively. They provide all local parks agencies with a 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1 cent sales tax

funding option subject to voter approval. **2625/5680** provides full bonding against the .1 percent revenue stream if voters approve a ballot measure. As a reminder, we believe the House bill will most likely be the ‘vehicle’ that gets acted upon in the end.

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

*(Operating Budget)* As I reported in Week 1, this one is done ☺ Through a combination of funds from both REI Inc. and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the \$50,000 for the update of the economic analysis first released in January 2015 will go forward! The Tacoma-based firm of Earth Economics will be leading this update of the study that revealed the combined might of the outdoor recreation sector: 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)* We don’t see any signs yet of the Legislature looking to do any re-opening of the Capital Budget. We will stay tuned!

## **“Support/Oppose” Items**

### **Efforts to Address Mental Health, Homelessness, Affordable Housing**

*(Policy Bills, Budgetary Items)* In 2020, WRPA will strongly support efforts by cities and counties, the Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA), and others to ensure there are tools to address a series of mental health, homelessness, and affordable housing challenges in local communities. A couple bills:

- ✓ **Governor-request legislation on planning for homeless shelters – HB 2649:** This bill started off with a requirement that local governments show in their local plans how they would accommodate a 50 percent increase in shelters. It has morphed, with current language requiring that cities and counties review current zoning and development regulations and report back to the Legislature by Dec. 1, 2021, with a list of all parcels suitable for development of additional shelters, sanctioned camping, affordable housing, supportive housing, and behavioral health facilities.
- ✓ **SHB 1406 cleanup bill – HB 2797:** This legislation, sponsored by Reps. June Robinson (D-Everett/38<sup>th</sup> Dist.) and Nicole Macri (D-Seattle/43<sup>rd</sup> Dist.), makes a number of technical fixes to the landmark **SHB 1406** legislation from 2019 that provides cities and counties with an estimated \$500 million worth of state sales tax credits over the next 20 years to construct and rehab affordable housing units. One change within the bill would extend the time by which cities could take a “Qualifying Local Tax” (QLT) to the ballot to maximize state sales tax credits. This change will need to be worked out with counties, some of which are nervous about the amending language.

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

*(Policy Bill)* As previously noted, it appears we will see a non-legislative path forward for the City of Olympia’s initiative to ban the sale and transportation of English and Atlantic Ivy in Washington State. I’ll keep folks posted on this one.

### **“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. We at WRPA will work to patch in to some of the Big Tent’s weekly policy calls during the 2020 Session.

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

(*Capital, Transportation, Operating Budgets*) As part of its “Healthy and Active Communities” initiative, 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. We’ll work to ensure there are no funding dislocations or diversions of:

- ✓ 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 **supports** the additional funding for this program.

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

(*Policy Bill*) Mea Culpa – I gave all of you the wrong bill number last week for this measure by Rep. Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline/32<sup>nd</sup> Dist.), chair of the House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans Committee. The bill to increase the Discover Pass fee to \$35 is **HB 2445**. It was re-referred from Chair Ryu’s Committee to the Appropriations Committee and has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing. WRPA **supports** it.

### 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](mailto: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. Unless I become aware of concerns, we are neutral on it. **2488** is pending in the House Finance Committee.
- **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 extends the maximum lease term from 50 to 80 years. **SB 6252** had a hearing last Thursday and should pass out of the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources, and Parks Committee on Thursday. **HB 2601** is scheduled for a hearing Wednesday and is expected to pass out of the House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans Committee on Friday.
- **Bills dealing with All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Off-Road-Vehicle (ORV) Registrations, Etc.:** All these bills are receiving hearings or moving or both – and note that I’ve corrected the bill number for the House companion to **SB 6115**. Sooo:
  - ✓ **SB 6114/HB 2243** gives cities under 3,000 population and counties more leeway to designate roads as suitable for ORV use. Both are pending in Transportation Committees;
  - ✓ **SB 6115/HB 2278** eliminates, under certain conditions, the registration exemption for out-of-state ORVs. **6115** passed out of Senate Transportation last Thursday and is now in the Senate Rules Committee;
  - ✓ **SB 6363/HB 2592** allows ATVs to also be registered as snowmobiles. The Senate bill is expected to pass out of Senate Transportation today (Monday), while the House measure will be heard in House Transportation on Wednesday; and
  - ✓ **HB 2447** enables new categories of off-road vehicles entering the market to be labeled as wheeled ATVs. It will be heard Wednesday in House Transportation.
- **SSB 5692/2SHB 1708, Fishing and Hunting License Fees:** This bill spurred a rigorous 2019 Session debate between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and sport-fishing interests. We will see whether the bill includes simply the fee increases sought by WDFW, or other concessions sought by the sport-fishing sector in exchange. No hearings have yet been scheduled.

- **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/3<sup>rd</sup> Dist.) and Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon (D-Burien/34<sup>th</sup> Dist.) have each had Transportation Committee hearings. 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 about the bill.
- **SB 5613/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/18<sup>th</sup> Dist.) has attempted to pass the Senate version of this bill – and it unanimously passed the Senate on Friday. Rep. Paul Harris (R-Vancouver/17<sup>th</sup> Dist.) takes up the House mantle this Session. A North Clark County roadway along the Lewis River is at the epicenter of this legislative initiative. Some outdoor groups are nervous about the statewide precedent this type of legislation could set – and for that reason, House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Chair Brian Blake (D-Aberdeen/19<sup>th</sup> Dist.) sees it as unnecessary.
- **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/32<sup>nd</sup> Dist.) crafted the bill after four (4) stand-up paddleboard fatalities occurred in 2019. The bill has now been amended to focus on human-powered vessels only. It remains pending in the Rep. Ryu’s House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans Committee.
- **HB 2444, transitioning current Boater Education Cards, requiring all boaters to obtain one at the end of 10 years, and then establishing a 10-year renewal schedule with fee payments:** This bill by Chair Ryu changes the Boater Education *Card* into something more akin to a *license*, which generated considerable controversy. Ryu is now looking to focus it primarily on education and course training for human-powered vessels, and has a Tuesday stakeholder meeting set up to discuss it further.
- **HB 2587, establishing a program for the designation of state scenic bikeways:** New 40<sup>th</sup> District House Member Alex Ramel (D-Bellingham), an avid outdoorsman, is the prime sponsor of this one. It is up for a hearing Wednesday in the House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans Committee of which Rep. Ramel is a member. The bill directs the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission to establish a scenic bikeways program for the designation and promotion of bicycle routes of notable scenic, recreational, cultural, or historic value.
- **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/9<sup>th</sup> Dist.) is the prime sponsor of both these bills. Neither has been scheduled for a hearing yet. The bills express legislative intent that lost Discover Pass revenue will be offset through the state General Fund.
- **SB 6403/HB 2501, allowable uses for the multi-use roadway safety account:** The Senate version of this bill is up for a hearing this afternoon in the Senate Transportation Committee, while the House measure is due to be heard Thursday in House Transportation. The companion bills flex money in the Account to be used for counties to perform maintenance on any road within a county that is authorized for use by all-terrain vehicles.
- **HB 2431, making technical changes to the Boating Under the Influence statute so that it more closely mirrors Driving Under the Influence:** This bill had a hearing last week and is expected to clear the House Public Safety Committee on Thursday.
- **SB 6541/HB 2767, establishing designated recreational target shooting areas on public lands:** This Department of Natural Resources (DNR) request bill has not yet had a hearing.
- **HB 2768/SB 6529 concerning urban and community forestry:** This DNR request bill would have the state providing technical assistance and resources if local jurisdictions wanted to adopt urban or community forestry programs to better protect their tree canopy. It is permissive and not mandatory. **2768** will receive a Tuesday morning hearing in the House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee.