

**WEEK 3 REPORT ON 2020 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE
FOR WRPA EXECUTIVE BOARD, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE, & MEMBERSHIP**

Doug Levy – 2/2/2020

Parks and Great Outdoors Day is this coming Thursday! *I hope to see many of you in the State Capital on Thursday as WRPA and the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition again team up to sponsor a legislative day in Olympia. We'll have a morning training at the Olympia Woman's Club, a noon-hour lunch in the House Rules Room where we will hear from legislative speakers, and the end of the day reception at the Governor's Mansion. There also will be an afternoon Finance Committee hearing on our local parks funding options bill (**HB 2625**). In-between, I know many of you have booked meetings with your legislators. WRPA also has a panel of activities the day before for those who are interested. The Agenda is here:*

- 7:00am – 8:00am Registration and pick up advocate packets at the Woman's Club of Olympia
- 8:00am – 8:45am Group advocacy training at the Woman's Club. Coffee & snacks will be provided
- 8:45am – 9:00am Escorted walk to Capitol Campus & legislative office buildings
- 9:00am – 12:00pm Meet with your legislators
- 12:00–1:00pm Lunch in House Rules Room featuring remarks from legislators (WRPA-sponsored)
- 1:00pm – 5:00pm Meet with your legislators
- 1:30 p.m. – House Finance Committee hearing – HB 2625 local parks funding options. *Please sign in with support for our bill!*
- 5:30pm – 7:00pm Legislative Reception at the Governor's Mansion. Buffet-style food & beverages provided (*separate registration required*).

If you view legislative sessions like a funnel, with the widest portion reserved for those first weeks of ubiquitous bills and hearings, and cutoff deadlines forming the narrow part of the funnel – well, we've reached that narrowing-out, winnowing-down part of the 2020 Session. This coming Friday (*Feb. 7*) is a cutoff deadline for bills to clear their policy committees in order to remain alive, followed by a Feb. 11 fiscal committee policy deadline for bills that have costs associated with them. We will get a much better sense of the state of play after these first cutoff deadlines come and go.

In Week 3, scores of city officials descended on the State Capital, with an estimated 400 of them participating in the annual "City Action Days" legislative conference sponsored by the Association of Washington Cities (AWC). Numerous county officials will be in Olympia this coming week.

For WRPA, Week 3 was a very good one, as our local funding options bill was set for a House Finance Committee 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 4 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*) Our priority bill, **HB 2625**, will have a hearing Thursday at 1:30 p.m. in the House Finance Committee. I will be joined in testimony by Mike Farrell of Monroe and also hope to have a Parks Director from either Clark County or SW Washington join me – please let me know if you are interested! We hope to move our bill out of House Finance by the end of the week and we are exploring an amendment – in order to gain Republican votes – that would restrict the term of bonding in **2625** to 20 years. More to come!

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

(Operating Budget) As previously reported, 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 showing that the outdoor recreation sector contributes 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 major re-opening of the Capital Budget.

“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:

- ✓ **SHB 1406 cleanup bill – SB 6631/HB 2797:** This legislation, sponsored by Sen. Rebecca Saldana (D-Seattle/37th Dist.) and by Reps. June Robinson (D-Everett/38th Dist.) and Nicole Macri (D-Seattle/43rd 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 legislation is scheduled for a Monday hearing in the Senate and a Friday hearing in the House.
- ✓ **HB 2907, imposing a payroll tax on King County employers based on their employees earning \$150,000 a year or more:** This bill applies only in counties with a population of two million or more – e.g. King County. The payroll tax of up to 2/10ths of 1 percent would raise an estimated \$121 million per year and would have to be used for affordable housing, homelessness, rental assistance, and public safety efforts to assist those dealing with behavioral health challenges. Of the revenue, 43 percent would be earmarked for Seattle, and all dollars raised for homelessness would have to go through a newly-formed Regional Homelessness Authority. Remaining funds are to be equitably distributed throughout the county. It appears large businesses such as Microsoft, Amazon, and Expedia *support* the proposal. Look for this bill to morph and go through considerable change if it is to have a chance of passing in 2020.
- ✓ **Bills to extend the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) 8-year and 12-year property tax exemption program for multi-family units – HB 2620/SB 6411, HB 2746:** Of these bills, cities and urban counties *support* the **2620/6411** legislation that is Governor-request, while they have significant *concerns* with **HB 2746** that includes more and new affordability criteria to be met for cities which want to continue to use the 8-year and 12-year programs. Negotiations around these bills are ongoing and local governments may have heartburn with some of the ‘affordability’ components being folded in.

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.

“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 into 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. No concerns yet to report, but we will 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) There still has not been a hearing scheduled on **HB 2445** by Rep. Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline/32nd Dist.), chair of the House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans Committee. The bill increases the Discover Pass fee to \$35. 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)

- **HB 2488, concerning park and recreation district levies:** This bill makes some very technical changes vis-à-vis park district levies and property tax. We are neutral on it. **2488** remains 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** passed unanimously out of the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources, and Parks Committee last Thursday and is now in Senate Ways & Means. **HB 2601** moved 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.:** Most of these bills are receiving hearings or moving or both:
 - ✓ **SB 6114/HB 2243** gives cities under 3,000 population and counties more leeway to designate roads as suitable for ORV use. **6114** is scheduled for a Senate Transportation Committee vote on Monday;
 - ✓ **SB 6115/HB 2278** eliminates, under certain conditions, the registration exemption for out-of-state ORVs. **6115** passed out of Senate Transportation and remains in the Senate Rules Committee;
 - ✓ **SB 6363/HB 2592** allows ATVs to also be registered as snowmobiles. The Senate bill moved out of Senate Transportation last Monday and is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

- ✓ **HB 2447** enables new categories of off-road vehicles entering the market to be labeled as wheeled ATVs. It is awaiting a committee vote in House Transportation.
 - ✓ **HB 2723, addressing off-road vehicle and snowmobile registration enforcement:** This bill modifies the reciprocity provision that allows a person that has properly registered an off-road vehicle (ORV) or snowmobile in another state to use the vehicle in Washington without registering it here. That reciprocity is eliminated for a state that does not impose a sales and use tax – e.g. Oregon. **2723** also requires the Department of Licensing (DOL) and the Department of Revenue (DOR) to jointly send out a letter to a Washington resident who purchased an ORV or snowmobile warranty in the preceding year, but who has not registered the vehicle in Washington, notifying the owner of the obligation to register. This bill will receive a hearing Monday 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. Still no hearings 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/3rd Dist.) and Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon (D-Burien/34th 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. The House Transportation Committee passed the bill last Wednesday on a 24-7 vote, with amending language requiring the “stop at all times” law to apply to stops that are used by school buses. 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/18th Dist.) has attempted to pass the Senate version of this bill – and it unanimously passed the Senate on Friday. Rep. Paul Harris (R-Vancouver/17th 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/19th Dist.) sees it as unnecessary. The House Local Government Committee passed a narrowed-down version of **2371** on Friday.
 - **SHB 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. **SHB 2443** would extend the mandatory wear-a-PFD-at-all times language to those on human-powered vessels - to *all ages*. Bill sponsor Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline/32nd Dist.) crafted the bill after four (4) stand-up paddleboard fatalities occurred in 2019. The bill moved out of House Housing, Community Development, and Veterans last Friday and will likely head to the Appropriations 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 does not intend to move **2444** any further this Session.
 - **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 passed unanimously Friday out of 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/9th 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 due for a Committee vote Monday in the Senate Transportation Committee, while the House measure had a hearing last 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.
- **SHB 2431, making technical changes to the Boating Under the Influence statute so that it more closely mirrors Driving Under the Influence:** This bill passed unanimously out of the House Public Safety Committee last Thursday with technical changes.
- **SB 6541/HB 2767, establishing designated recreational target shooting areas on public lands:** This Department of Natural Resources (DNR) request bill has been scheduled for a House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee hearing on Tuesday, and a Committee vote the next day.
- **SB 6529/HB 2768, 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** is up for a Committee vote Tuesday in the House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee.
- **SB 6670, enabling the Parks & Recreation Commission to provide Discover Passes to libraries which can make it available to their patrons on a loan basis:** This bill would appropriate \$35,000 to the State Parks Commission to set up this collaboration with libraries. **6670** is scheduled for a Tuesday hearing in the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources, and Parks Committee. It is scheduled for a Committee vote two days later.