

Wednesday April 22, 2009

Environmental Community

Hot List for the STATE HOUSE

We understand that SHB 1614, one of four Environmental Community Priorities, may be coming up for a vote today or tomorrow. There has been a lot of misinformation circulated about this bill. This hotlist responds to those misleading arguments. Please contact me if you have any questions about the Hot List.

Respectfully,

Clifford R. Traisman, State Lobbyist, Washington Conservation Voters & Washington Environmental Council

Assertion: SHB 1614 is a tax and not a fee, and is subject to 18th Amendment restrictions on gas taxes.

FACT: SHB 1614 is a polluter-pays fee. It is imposed at the refinery, not at the gas pump. This bill meets the legal test for a fee: i.e. there is a direct relationship between impacts caused by the oil industry's products and the use of the funds raised through the fee. This bill has been reviewed by outside legal counsel and legislative staff to ensure it is crafted as a fee. Because this is a fee which mitigates against an impact, it does not have any relationship to the 18th amendment, which applies only to gas taxes.

Assertion: SHB 1614 unfairly singles out and punishes petroleum, one of thirteen identified sources that can impact stormwater runoff.

FACT: Petroleum products are by far the most significant contributor to stormwater pollution levels. Ecology estimates that between 45% and 65% percent of stormwater pollution comes from petroleum. The fee ensures that oil companies take financial responsibility for the pollution caused by their product.

Assertion: SHB 1614 will cost citizens and businesses over \$100 million per year (1.2 billion over the next 10 years according to OFM) in new taxes at a time when our state's economy is struggling.

FACT: The funds that are raised from this fee on international oil companies will go directly back into the local economy in jobs and materials. Stormwater public works projects will generate significant new jobs in the construction and other trade industries. Without this polluter-pays fee, local taxpayers would have to pay the full cost of federally mandated obligation. This fee on petroleum products is a much fairer way of collecting fees directly from the source of the pollution.

Please vote to SUPPORT SHB 1614, Invest in Clean Water, when it comes for a vote.

Contributing Organizations

American Rivers ▪ Audubon Washington ▪ Climate Solutions ▪ Conservation Northwest ▪ Earth Ministry ▪ Environment Washington
Fuse ▪ Futurewise ▪ Heart of America Northwest ▪ League of Women Voters of Washington ▪ Lutheran Public Policy Office
National Wildlife Federation ▪ Nature Conservancy ▪ NW Energy Coalition ▪ People for Puget Sound ▪ Sierra Club ▪ Surfrider
Foundation ▪ Transportation Choices Coalition ▪ Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation ▪ Washington Conservation Voters
Washington Environmental Council ▪ WashPIRG ▪ Washington Toxics Coalition ▪ Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition