

WEEK of Monday, February 2, 2009

Environmental Community

Hot List for the STATE HOUSE

For the seventh year in a row, the environmental community will be sending legislators and key stakeholders its weekly Environmental Community “Hot List” detailing positions on no more than ten of the highest priority issues for the upcoming week. Separate Hot Lists will be prepared for the House and Senate and distributed each Monday via email and in hard copy to your office. At the end of the document, you will find a list of environmental community organizations that contributed to the Hot List. We hope you find this communication helpful. Please feel free to contact me at clifford@wcvoters.org or 206-369-2235, if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION

HB 1172: Implementing a transfer of development rights program.

Local Government & Housing Committee: Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- HB 1172 is based on the consensus of a two-year stakeholder process focused on enhancing the transfer of development rights tool as a voluntary mechanism to preserve working farm and forest lands. Amendments should be limited to technical clarifications.
- The state loses an average of 23,720 acres of farmland to development annually. This bill creates a voluntary tool to better focus growth in the central Puget Sound’s urban areas while permanently protecting the region’s rural and resource land from encroaching development.

HB 1334: Concerning water resource management on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- This bill would allow agricultural water users to consume more water by transferring conserved water to new irrigated acreage. Although water conservation should be encouraged, it should not be used to further draw down already burdened rivers and streams.
- This bill undermines the Columbia River Management Program by unilaterally amending statutory language that was agreed to in 2006 by both agricultural and environmental communities.

HB 1360: Concerning funding for residential infrastructure development.

Local Government & Housing Committee: Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- HB 1360 creates a state fund for basic infrastructure that supports increased capacity for dense, affordable residential development in neighborhoods near transit centers. The fund is financed if and when REET collections exceed the fiscal growth factor to provide jurisdictions with low interest loans.
- In addition to environmental organizations, the Associated General Contractors of Washington, Washington Realtors, American Planning Association, PSRC’s Prosperity Partnership, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Puget Sound Partnership and the Cascade Land Conservancy are supporting this bill.

HB 1456: Preventing the conversion of certain natural resource lands.

Local Government & Housing: Public Hearing & Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Fully contained communities are threatening working lands and rural communities all over Washington. The lack of clear standards and adequate safeguards has prevented these developments from being “fully contained,” thereby threatening nearby rural and resource areas with increased traffic and urbanized encroachment.
- HB 1456 is a commonsense approach to prevent future fully contained communities from being developed on natural resource lands, helping to reduce the pressure to urbanize these working lands.

HB 1469: Establishing the product stewardship recycling act for mercury-containing lights.

Environmental Health Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Creates a producer-provided recycling program for CFLs and other mercury-containing lights from residents, small businesses and small school districts. The program will properly handle the mercury while also bolstering consumer confidence in using energy-efficient lights that reduce greenhouse gases.
- Budget-neutral to the State. A fee paid by producers of mercury-containing lights recovers agency oversight costs.

HB 1534: Concerning local utility district response to well notification.

Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Each year, thousands of new water wells are drilled around the state, promoting sprawl and placing an immense and unsustainable burden on both ground and surface waters. Under existing law, these wells are exempt from the permitting requirements that apply to other water uses.
- This bill requires future water users to connect to an existing water system if available, rather than drilling a permit-exempt well.

HB 1571 : Regarding the adjudication of water rights.

Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Adjudication is a critical tool to understand how much water is actually used in a basin and the amount of water available. Unfortunately, only a small fraction of water rights in Washington have been adjudicated, leaving the state unable to adequately manage its rivers and streams.
- This bill allows Ecology to initiate limited adjudications and streamlines the adjudication process to promote efficiency and provide certainty for water users.

HB 1580: Establishing a pilot local water management program in one qualified jurisdiction.

Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee: Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Water is a limited and publicly owned resource that is asked to meet many demands. Water policies must fairly balance multiple needs for critical fish habitat, agriculture, industry, and use in our homes.
- This bill establishes a pilot project for collaborative water management in the Walla Walla basin to enhance instream flows for fish while also providing flexibility and certainty to water users.

HB 1747: Reducing climate pollution in the built environment (a.k.a. Efficiency First; Rep. Rolfe, Prime Sponsor).

Technology, Energy & Communications Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- One of the four environmental priorities for 2009, this bill asserts Washington’s regional and national clean-energy leadership by putting efficiency first by promoting super-efficient, low-energy-use buildings.
- This bill requires super efficient energy codes, disclosure of buildings’ energy use scores to prospective buyers, makes our public buildings models of energy efficiency, and provides financing energy-saving upgrades to existing buildings.



HB 1819: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (a.k.a. Cap and Invest; Rep. Upthegrove, Prime Sponsor)
Ecology & Parks Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- One of the four environmental priorities for 2009, this bill implements the limits on global warming pollution established by the Legislature in 2008 by authorizing Washington's involvement in the pollution reduction program created by the Western Climate Initiative.
- Last year, the businesses and residents of Washington State spent over \$16 billion on oil imports – far more than our deficit. Cap and Invest is a commitment to keep energy dollars in-state, creating more – and better – jobs than importing dirty energy.



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