

WEEK of Monday, February 9, 2009

Environmental Community

Hot List for the STATE SENATE

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION

SB 5114: Eliminating the partial relinquishment of water rights.

SB 5692: Regarding sufficient cause for the nonuse of water.

Environment, Water, & Energy Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *OPPOSE Both Bills*

- Water policies must fairly balance multiple needs for critical fish habitat, agriculture, industry, and use in our homes. By weakening the long-standing principle that water users relinquish the right to water that has not been used for five or more years, these bills could encourage water hoarding and speculation, and may seriously impact the rights of other water users.
- Changes to the state’s relinquishment requirements should occur only within the context of balanced reform that benefits farms, fish and people.

SB 5138: Creating an integrated climate change response strategy.

Environment, Water, & Energy Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This bill addresses an important aspect of climate change-it focuses on the vulnerability of our water supply and natural resources to changes in temperature and precipitation patterns, and declares that the state should develop an integrated climate change response strategy.
- To plan for these changes, the bill directs the Department of Ecology to assemble a “climate change impacts coordinating team,” which will gather, assess, and distribute relevant science and information on climate change.

SB 5299: Concerning water resource management on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

Environment, Water, & Energy Committee: Public Hearing

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.
- The bill raises serious legal questions because it applies retroactively and would impact the rights of other water users. This bill also undermines the Columbia River Management Program by unilaterally amending statutory language that was agreed to in 2006 by both agricultural and environmental communities.

SB 5344: Requiring a Permanent Oil Spill Response Tug at Neah Bay.

Environment, Water & Energy Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- With a track record of 41 rescues or assists, the Response Tug at Neah Bay has proven itself the most effective means of preventing and responding to oil spills in Puget Sound and on the outer coast.
- This bill will save the state \$3.6 million in the second year of the biennium and in subsequent years by requiring oil companies and other shippers to privately contract for the placement of the tug.

SB 5377: Concerning funding for infrastructure that supports dense, affordable development in transit-oriented areas

Economic Development and Trade & Innovation: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- SB 5377 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.
- This creates a fund for strategic investment of state resources to match state policy goals of accommodating future population growth, managing growth responsibly, providing access to affordable housing, and reducing global warming pollution. The bill enjoys broad support from AGC, REALTORS, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Puget Sound Partnership, Prosperity Partnership, and the Cascade Land Conservancy.

SB 5430: Concerning water discharge fees.

Ways and Means Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Allows Department of Ecology to raise fees on Wastewater Discharge Permits to address a large deficit which the program is experiencing.
- Supported by a coalition of businesses, environmental groups, and local governments.

SB 5533: Regarding the adjudication of water rights.

Environment, Water, & Energy Committee: Public Hearing

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.

SB 5726: Clarifying the integration of the shoreline management act policies with the growth management act

Environment, Water & Energy Committee: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This bill would eliminate the confusion caused by a Supreme Court decision and restore the original legislative intent that regulates critical areas in shorelines through the SMA—upon the next update of a jurisdiction's SMA regulations.
- This bill, requested by the Departments of CTED & Ecology, is broadly supported by the environmental community, local governments and ports.

SB 5735: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (a.k.a. Cap and Invest; Sen. Phil Rockefeller, Prime Sponsor).

Environment, Water & Energy Committee: Public Hearing and Possible Executive Session

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.
- Families and businesses in Washington will continue to suffer from fossil fuel price spikes and financial insecurity until we aggressively invest in clean energy alternatives and maximum efficiency. With Cap and Invest, we keep our energy dollars in-state rather than sending them to Houston or Riyadh, and stabilize energy prices by making our own abundant local sources of energy more competitive.



SB 5854: Reducing climate pollution in the built environment (a.k.a. Efficiency First, Sen. Derek Kilmer, Prime Sponsor).

Environment, Water & Energy 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 for energy-saving upgrades to existing buildings.



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