

WEEK of Monday, February 1, 2010

Environmental Community

Hot List for the STATE SENATE

For the eighth 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

WORKING FOR CLEAN WATER: *PLEASE CO-SPONSOR*

Later this week a bill will be dropped that creates jobs, rebuilds local economies, and cleans up polluted waterways like Puget Sound and the Spokane River. By increasing the existing tax on Hazardous Substances (levied on petroleum and other toxic chemicals), the state can raise \$450 million per biennium to fund job-creating clean water projects in every district and temporarily provide much needed dollars for the General Fund. The bill is prime-sponsored by Sen. Murray and supported by environmentalists, labor, local governments, and the Rebuilding our Economic Future Coalition. PLEASE CO-SPONSOR THIS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY PRIORITY BILL!



SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION

SB 5543: Establishing the product stewardship recycling act for mercury-containing lights.

Environment, Water & Energy: Public Hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT PSSB 5543*

- Creates a producer-provided recycling program for CFLs and other mercury-containing lights from residents who currently have limited or no recycling options across the state. The program will protect people and the environment from mercury release 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.

SB 6301: Concerning the designation of urban growth areas outside the hundred year floodplain by counties.

Government Operations & Elections: Public Hearing & Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- Currently counties are not allowed to extend urban areas into floodplains when they have other alternatives to focus future growth. This is important because just in the past two years, flooding has caused over \$1 billion dollars damage to the state, not to mention threatening lives and property and damaging the environment.
- This bill allows counties to ignore the cost-saving and damage-avoiding law directing future growth into floodplains. Further, it allows urban growth to leapfrog over undeveloped land in a manner that will encourage sprawl and harm water quality.

SB 6343: Establishing the Washington food policy council.

Agriculture and Rural Economic Development: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- A State Food Policy Council would bring together a broad group of stakeholders and agencies to better coordinate with the goal of increasing the production, sales, and consumption of Washington-grown foods, and to promote programs that bring healthy Washington grown foods to low income people.

SB 6366: Concerning permits for certain major transportation corridor projects.

Transportation: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- Will gut the local and environmental permitting processes for all state highway projects over one billion dollars.
- Directs all permit appeals directly to the Superior Court, robbing local jurisdictions of environmental, shoreline, and community protections.

SB 6422: Regarding environmental and land use hearings boards and making more uniform the timelines for filing appeals with those boards.

Government Operations & Elections: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT PSSB 6422*

- This legislation seeks to streamline the process and timelines for environmental and land use appeals. It is part of the Governor's package to improve the efficiencies of the natural resource agencies.
- The proposed substitute ensures that the streamlining efforts also maintain existing levels of public participation and community protections. The filing deadlines for appeals that will go to the land use board will stay at 60 days; all other environmental appeals are given 30 day filing deadlines.

SB 6489: Adding products to the energy efficiency code.

Environment, Water and Energy: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This bill adopts efficiency standards for televisions.
- In 2020, these efficiency standards will save Washington energy consumers about \$24.8 million per year. Energy savings will be an estimated 45 annual average megawatts – equal to the average output of about 60 wind turbines.

SB 6611: Extending the deadlines for the review and evaluation of comprehensive land use plan and development regulations for three years.

Government Operations & Elections: Public Hearing & Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT IF AMENDED*

- SB 6611 delays the next time local governments update their land use plans for three years. These updates are where cities and counties comprehensively review and revise their 20-year growth plans to reflect future land capacity & demand, population projection, and infrastructure funding.
- The amendment protects commercially significant farm and forest land from being converted to other uses during this 3 year delay. Paving over resource land is difficult if not impossible to undo; local governments should protect these non-urban lands from conversion until they are able to comprehensively review their land use plans.

SB 6656: Energy efficiency financing- Authorizing a local financing tool to fund energy efficiency upgrades and removing financial barriers to implementing conservation programs.

Environment, Water and Energy: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This bill unlocks the full job-creating potential of making our homes and businesses more energy efficient by allowing municipalities to set up revolving loan programs that overcome the biggest barrier to money-saving conservation projects in Washington- the lack of up-front financing. Conservation loans are paid back with energy savings through utility or property tax bills.
- The bill also allows utilities to recover investments made to make our homes and businesses more energy efficient.

SB 6763: Restricting the sales and use tax exemptions for machinery and equipment used in the generation of renewable local electric utilities or persons contracting with local electric utilities.

Ways and Means: Public hearing

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- Last year, the Senate and Governor Gregoire resoundingly approved a two-year extension of the green sales tax exemption at full value, followed by two more years at a 75 percent exemption rate. The sales tax exemption meant the difference for ensuring economically viable renewable energy investments in Washington – those investments would have gone elsewhere if the sales tax exemption had not been extended for two-four years.

- Changing the green energy benefits now is poor policy and sends a bad signal to renewable energy companies about doing business in Washington.

Contributing Organizations

American Rivers ▪ Audubon Washington ▪ Climate Solutions ▪ Conservation Northwest ▪ Earth Ministry ▪ Environment Washington
Fuse ▪ Futurewise ▪ Heart of America Northwest ▪ Lands Council ▪ 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