

WEEK of Monday, January 18, 2010

Environmental Community

Hot List for the STATE HOUSE

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

OUR THREE 2010 ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

Given the challenges of the session ahead, for the first time ever, our coalition has chosen just three priority proposals for the 2010 legislative session. Our 2010 Priorities create jobs, reduce the threat of toxic chemicals, and maintain core environmental protections in a time of slashed budgets. The three priorities are:

WORKING FOR CLEAN WATER

For the second year in a row, the Working for Clean Water bill has been selected as one of our highest priority bills. The bill is about creating jobs, rebuilding our local economies, and cleaning up polluted waterways like Puget Sound and the Spokane River. Each year, millions of gallons of petroleum end up in our water through storm runoff, a serious threat to our health and the environment. We are proposing a fee on polluters to fund shovel-ready, local projects all over the state to stop this contamination. Last year, this bill passed the House of Representatives (HB 1614).

SAFE BABY BOTTLE ACT

More and more evidence, including last week’s announcement by the EPA, shows that the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) is harmful to children’s health, linking it to cancer, miscarriage, obesity, reproductive problems, and hyperactivity. The Safe Baby Bottle Act would protect our health and the environment by phasing out BPA in baby bottles, food and beverage cans, and other consumer products. This bill (HB 1180/SB 5282) was first introduced in the 2009 session where it made significant progress.

SUSTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS IN THE BUDGET

Last year, the budget decimated many core environmental programs and cuts to these programs were more severe than in other areas of the State’s General Fund Budget. We cannot afford to further impair critical environmental protections. Given the size of the deficit, we will work with the Legislature to ensure that budget decisions are focused on protecting our health and safety. A specific list of highest priority programs will be presented to you during the session.

POSSIBLE HOUSE FLOOR ACTION

2SHB 1180: Regarding the use of bisphenol A. (a.k.a. Safe Baby Bottle Act)

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- The Safe Baby Bottle bill protects children's health by banning the toxic chemical—bisphenol A (BPA) in baby bottles, sippy cups, sports water bottles, and other food and beverage containers intended for children 3 and under.
- The Food and Drug Administration recently reversed its opinion on the safety of BPA and is now concerned about the hormone disrupting chemical's use in baby bottles. In its new opinion on BPA, the agency cited the potential for effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children among the reason for their concern.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION

ESHB 1614: Reducing the amount of petroleum pollution in stormwater. (a.k.a. Working for Clean Water)

Capital Budget Committee: Possible public hearing

Position: *SUPPORT*

- HB 1614 will put Washington back to work. A per-barrel oil fee imposed upon refineries will directly fund \$120 million each year in local projects to clean up petroleum pollution in our water, creating thousands of new jobs across the state.
- By volume, petroleum is the most significant contaminant in stormwater that runs into our lakes, rivers and streams. A priority for local governments, labor and environmentalists, this polluter-pays bill will help rebuild local economies and clean up polluted waterways from Puget Sound to the Spokane River.



HB 2416: Establishing energy efficiency standards for consumer products.

Technology, Energy & Communications: Public hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This bill adopts efficiency standards for consumer products including 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

HB 2468: Concerning the metering of permit exempt wells.

Agriculture and Natural Resources: Possible Executive Session

Position: *OPPOSE*

- There are over 400,000 permit-exempt wells in Washington and thousands of new wells are drilled every year. Many of these wells do not have meters that measure the amount of water being used, which creates a critical information gap that needs to be addressed to improve water resource management.
- Currently, the Department of Ecology has the authority to meter permit-exempt well withdrawals, but this bill would take away Ecology's authority to meter existing wells. All water uses should be measured and monitored so that Ecology can effectively manage water resources and protect senior water rights.

HB 2505: Concerning the regulation of nonindustrial forests.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- This bill would exempt landowners who have harvested less than two million board feet of timber during any 3-year period from the legislatively-approved Forests and Fish state logging rules that are designed to protect clean water. This exemption would jeopardize the state's 50-year Habitat Conservation Plan Agreement with the federal government.
- The environmental community is working hard on other ways to help forest landowners with smaller holdings--while still providing environmental protection--including simpler streamside buffers and funding for the Forest Riparian Easement Program (FREP).

HB 2532: Regarding a pilot program for the withdrawal of water in a cluster development.

Agriculture and Natural Resources: Possible Executive Session

Position: *OPPOSE*

- This bill creates a pilot project in Clallam County that would allow construction of a cluster development on agricultural lands and use groundwater from permit-exempt wells.
- The pilot project would induce reliance on water supplies in an over-appropriated basin (i.e., where no water is available without mitigation) at the expense of senior water rights holders and in-stream flows. In addition, the pilot project will increase pressure to urbanize surrounding farmland, which will exacerbate water and land resource conflicts in the future.

HB 2541: Maintaining a base of forest lands that may be used for commercial forestry.

Agriculture and Natural Resources: Hearing and possible Executive Session

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- This legislation undermines the efficiency and functionality of state Forest Practices Board rule-making for logging, by requiring the Board to propose and fund incentives for voluntary measures before it can adopt any new rules, as well as applying other hurdles to efficient rule-making to protect public resources such as clean water.

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- The legislatively-approved Forests and Fish rules require that proposed rule changes come from a multi-stakeholder process that includes the timber industry before they are brought to the Board. This bill is an end-run around that legislatively-directed stakeholder process.

HB 2548: Regarding withdrawing various waters from the state from additional appropriations.**Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Possible Executive Session**Position:** ***OPPOSE***

- This bill places unreasonable limits on the Department of Ecology's authority to withdraw waters from further appropriation when insufficient information is available to make responsible water management decisions. The bill also places an unrealistic and unfair burden on the department to make water available to all future exempt groundwater uses regardless of whether water is actually available or not.
- Water is a finite resource, and senior water rights and instream flows face tremendous uncertainty with the proliferation of permit-exempt wells and impacts from climate change. Ecology must be able to withdraw waters to address.

HB 2591: Recovering the actual cost of processing applications for water right permits.**Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Possible Executive Session**Position:** ***SUPPORT***

- The Department of Ecology's Water Resource Program is over 85% dependent on the General Fund. Recent budget cuts have decreased staff and resources for the program to process a long backlog of water right applications and change applications, which frustrates applicants and slows work through the Trust Water Rights Program.
- This bill generates revenue through water management fees and requires permit-exempt well users to register with the Department of Ecology. The funds will be used to eliminate the backlog of water applications within the next 4 years.

HB 2738 & HB 2784: Amend chapter 19.285 RCW, the energy independence act.**Technology, Energy & Communications:** Public hearings**POSITION:** ***OPPOSE***

- These bills would amend the Citizens Clean Energy Initiative 937 passed in 2006.
- Any amendment to I-937 needs to be considered within the context of all proposed amendments and through the stakeholder process underway since the interim.

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