



SESSION WATCH

Monday, February 26, 2018 (day 50 of the 60-day session)

Beef Day!

The big excitement in Olympia last week was Beef Day! The Washington Cattlemen's Association hosted their annual bar-be-que featuring free beef sandwiches. The Washington Asparagus Commission joined in with barbeque asparagus. Our own Rick Nelson was there helping to man the grills.

Committee Cutoffs Again

Last week was also opposite house committee cutoff. With each deadline that passes, the bill tracking list gets shorter.

Both the House and Senate released their proposed supplemental budgets last week. Both budgets have already been through a round of amendments and will be headed to a conference committee to resolve final differences soon. Even-year budgets (like 2018) are supposed to be supplemental. That means they are intended to make minor changes.

Senate Budget Chair Says No New Taxes

Last week, the Senate budget chair said there would be no new taxes. Her budget uses nearly a billion dollars from the Rainy-Day Fund to

fully fund teacher salaries one year earlier than required and to provide some property tax relief.

Despite the pledge about no new taxes, the Carbon tax passed out of the Ways & Means Committee on a party line vote. Even as they voted for it to keep it moving, several Democrats spoke out and said they did not plan to vote for it on the floor. It appears unlikely to move further, but anything is possible.

Capital Gains Tax to Lower Property Tax

The House budget uses a new capital gains tax to lower property tax rates. The author of the capital gains tax, Rep. Kris Lytton, Anacortes, says she has worked hard to protect farmers and small business, however, all farm and small business organizations remain opposed to the new tax.

Fair Funding Statutes Bill Should Pass

In happier news, the bill updating fair funding statutes is moving and should pass. A second bill which would increase the amount of the fair fund for the first time in twenty years is struggling, but still alive. Please contact your Representatives and ask for their help with SB 6386 dealing with Fair Funding.

Upcoming Hearings

Transportation (Senate) - SHR 1, - 2/26 @ 1:30pm

- E2SHB 2595 - Exec Session - Concerning procedures in order to automatically register citizens to vote.

Technology & Economic Development (House) - HHR C, JLOB - 3/1 @ 8:00am

- E2SSB 5935 - Exec Session - Enhancing consumer access, affordability, and quality of broadband and advanced telecommunications services.
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Selected Bills of Interest

High Priority Bills

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>
<p>Fairs, youth shows, & expos</p> <p><u>HB 2725</u> (SB 6368)</p> <p>Modifies provisions regarding agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions on the following: (1) The state fair fund; (2) Categories of agricultural fairs that may be eligible for state allocations; (3) Eligibility requirements for those allocations; (4) Reimbursements for incurred operating expenses; and (5) Terms of the members of the fairs commission.</p>	S Rules 2	Blake	Support
<p>Fairs, youth shows, & expos</p> <p><u>SB 6368</u> (HB 2725)</p> <p>Modifies provisions regarding agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions on the following: (1) The state fair fund; (2) Categories of agricultural fairs that may be eligible for state allocations; (3) Eligibility requirements for those allocations; (4) Reimbursements for incurred operating expenses; and (5) Terms of the members of the fairs commission.</p>	H Rules R	Warnick	Support
<p>Ag. fair funding/sales taxes</p> <p><u>E2SSB 6386</u> (HB 2765)</p> <p>Requires the money received as the result of the imposition of the state retail sales tax on sales occurring during events held at county fairgrounds or grounds for fairs operated by a nonprofit where agricultural fairs occur, to be deposited into the fair fund. Requires the department of revenue to notify the state treasurer when the money collected and deposited for a fiscal year is 2.5 million dollars. Requires any money collected in excess of 2.5 million dollars for the fiscal year to be deposited in the general fund.</p>	H Approps	Warnick	Support
<p>Pesticide application safety</p> <p><u>E2SSB 6529</u></p> <p>Creates the pesticide application safety work group to develop recommendations for improving the safety of pesticide applications. Expires December 31, 2018.</p>	H Rules R	Saldaña	Oppose

Medium Priority Bills

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>
<p>Greenhouse gas emissions</p> <p><u>E3SHB 1144</u></p> <p>Addresses the most recent assessment of climate change science and changes certain requirements of the state with regard to greenhouse gas emission limits. Requires the department of ecology and the department of commerce to include the following in the report to the governor and certain committees of the senate and house: A description of Washington's per capita and total greenhouse gas emissions as compared to the per capita and total greenhouse gas emissions of other states, including Washington's ranking among other states as an emitter of greenhouse gases on both a per capita and total emissions basis. Requires the department of ecology to: (1) Survey state agencies to determine each agency's annual expenditures made during the biennium to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to support the achievement of the reduction goals; and (2) In coordination with the department of natural resources, calculate and include in its reporting the total emissions of greenhouse gases from wildfires in the state.</p>	S Rules 2	Fitzgibbon	Concerns

Rural county jobs program S Ways & Means Chapman Support
Creates the rural county high employer demand jobs program to: (1) Meet the workforce needs of business and industry in rural counties by assisting students in earning certificates, associate degrees, or other industry-recognized credentials necessary for employment in high employer demand fields; and (2) Provide selected students scholarship funds, as determined by the opportunity scholarship board, to help them meet their eligible expenses for up to one year, when they enroll in a community or technical college program that prepares them for a high employer demand field. Requires the opportunity scholarship board to create the rural jobs program account, from which scholarship funds will be disbursed beginning no later than the fall term of the 2020 academic year, if by that date, state matching funds have been received. Creates the rural jobs program match transfer account.

[E2SHB
2177](#)

Automatic voter registration S Transportation Hudgins Oppose
Establishes the automatic voter registration act of 2018. Requires the department of licensing to implement an automatic voter registration system so a person who is eligible to vote and is applying for or renewing an enhanced driver's license or identicaid may register to vote or update voter registration at the time of registration or renewal, by an automated process. Prohibits, unless required by law, the department of licensing from: (1) Sharing information used to verify identity with a federal agency or contractual obligation existing as of July 1, 2019; and (2) Collecting records or documentation used to certify eligibility to vote once the certification process has been completed and recorded. Requires the state health benefit exchange to: (1) Provide directly to the secretary of state's office information required to register to vote or transfer a registration for certain consenting persons; and (2) Study the feasibility of implementing automatic voter registration. Requires the office of the secretary of state to conduct a study and prepare recommendations for creating: (1) An automatic voter registration process for residents who recently completed the naturalization process; and (2) For an automatic pending voter registration process at birth. Exempts the following from public inspection and copying under the public records act: Information maintained in the pending voter registration database. Provides that sections 201 and 202 of this act are null and void if appropriations are not approved.

[E2SHB
2595
\(E3SSB
6353\)](#)

Telecomm. authority/ports S Rules 2 Dye Support
Extending existing telecommunications authority to all ports in Washington state in order to facilitate public-private partnerships in wholesale telecommunications services and infrastructure.

[SHB
2664 \(SB
6426\)](#)

Ag industry behavioral hlth S Ways & Means Wilcox Support
Requires the department of health to: (1) Establish a pilot program to support behavioral health improvement and suicide prevention efforts for members of the agricultural industry workforce; (2) Contract with an entity that has behavioral health and suicide prevention expertise to develop a free resource for workers in the agricultural industry; and (3) Use an entity that has an existing telephonic and web-based resource, including entities that have prepared similar resources for other states. Requires the state office of rural health to convene a task force on behavioral health and suicide prevention in the agricultural industry and requires the task force to review the following issues: (1) Data related to the behavioral health status of persons associated with the agricultural industry, including suicide rates, substance use rates, and availability and use of behavioral health services; (2) Factors unique to the agricultural industry that affect the behavioral health of persons working in the industry; (3) Components that should be addressed in the pilot program, including consideration of components that relate to similar programs funded or partially funded by the federal office of rural health policy; and (4) Options

[2SHB
2671](#)

to improve the behavioral health status of and reduce suicide risk among agricultural workers and their families, including individual focused and community focused strategies.

<u>SHB 2967</u>	Capital gains tax/prop. tax Assisting Washington families by improving the fairness of the state's tax system by enacting a capital gains tax and providing property tax relief.	H Rules R	Lytton	Oppose
<u>ESSB 5397</u> (SHB 1537)	Petition disclosure Regulates signature gatherers and those who employ signature gatherers.	H Rules R	Warnick	Support
<u>ESSB 5513</u> (HB 1500)	Tax exemptions Declares an intent to: (1) Incorporate a more explicit recognition of the fiscal impact of tax preferences on the state budget; and (2) Reform the tax preference expenditure process by including the fiscal impact of tax preference expenditures in the budget outlook document that is created as part of the biennial state budget process.	H Finance	Frocht	Oppose
<u>ESSB 6002</u>	Voting rights act Establishes the Washington voting rights act of 2018 to promote equal voting opportunity in certain political subdivisions and establish a cause of action to redress lack of voter opportunity.	H 2nd Reading	Saldaña	Concerns
<u>SB 6180</u>	Planting and harvest dates States that the planting and harvesting seasons are January 1st through December 31st of each year, with regard to the exemption for agricultural transporters.	H Rules R	Hobbs	Support

Low Priority Bills

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>
<u>SB 6278</u> Seed certification fee use Concerning the use of seed certification fees. Revises the Washington state seed act to authorize the fees, that are collected for the certification of seed, to be used for services involving breeder seed, foundation seed, registered seed, and certified seed.	H 2nd Reading	Warnick	Support
<u>SSB 6318</u> Intrastate food safety Clarifying existing law by creating a new intrastate food safety and security chapter from existing intrastate food safety laws and moving certain provisions in the intrastate commerce food, drugs, and cosmetics act to the titles of the agencies that administer the provisions.	H Rules R	Takko	Support

Other Bills

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>
<u>SHB 2940</u> Business and occupation tax	H Approps	Lytton	

Making the business and occupation tax more progressive.

Broadband & telecomm service

H Tech & Econ D

Sheldon

Support

[E2SSB
5935](#)

Creates the governor's office on broadband access within the department of commerce, and with the mission of improving economic vitality, health care access, and education through greater access to broadband services. Requires the office to: (1) In collaboration with the utilities and transportation commission, the office of the chief information officer, and the community economic revitalization board, serve as the coordinating body for public and private efforts to ensure statewide broadband access and deployment; (2) Be responsible for all matters regarding the adoption of statewide broadband access and deployment; (3) Establish a competitive grant program to assist qualified local governments and tribes to build infrastructure for open access, high speed broadband services; (4) Study taxes imposed on the capital costs associated with providing retail broadband service, including sales and use taxes; (5) Develop a small cell facility deployment permitting model ordinance for cities and towns; and (6) Consult with cities, counties, and service providers when developing the model ordinance. Authorizes the office to convene an advisory group to: (1) Make recommendations on developing a statewide rural broadband strategy to ensure broadband access statewide by January 1, 2026; and (2) Conduct a gap analysis on the deployment of broadband services in underserved and unserved areas of the state. Creates the broadband access account and requires expenditures from the account to only be used for the expansion of broadband access.

Federal produce safety rule

H Rules R

Honeyford

[SB 6319
\(HB
2681\)](#)

Establishes the produce safety rule implementation act to assist state produce farmers in implementation of the produce safety rule adopted by the United States food and drug administration pursuant to the federal food, drug, and cosmetic act. Authorizes the department of agriculture to: (1) Take actions necessary to cooperate in implementation of the produce safety rule, including entering into cooperative agreements with the United States food and drug administration, conducting compliance verification activities, enforcing regulatory compliance, and accepting federal funding to carry out the activities; (2) Cooperate with the United States food and drug administration in implementation of the produce safety rule only to the extent that the department receives federal funding for the activities; and (3) Establish a voluntary program for farms exempt or partially exempt from the produce safety rule to verify that the farms comply with the rule. Exempts the following from disclosure under the public records act: Information obtained from the federal government or others under contract with the federal government or records obtained by the department of agriculture. Creates a produce safety account in the agricultural local fund.

Legislative Department

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