



SESSION WATCH

Monday, January 15, 2018 (day 8 of the 60-day session)

Legislature Officially in Session

The legislature officially opened Monday, January 8, 2018. With a week already passed, the two highest priority issues for most rural legislators this session are finding a permanent solution to the Hirst case and passing a capital budget. The capital budget not only funds construction and repair of public buildings, infrastructure and other long-term investments in our state, it also includes health and safety grants for fairgrounds. These issues are unfinished business from the 2017 legislative session.

The 60-day short session is supposed to focus on a supplemental budget and urgent policy changes. It was not intended as a time for major legislation, yet, significant bills have been introduced and Governor Inslee has proposed a carbon tax.

Governor Inslee's Carbon Tax

In his state-of-the-state address, Governor Inslee did not mention the Hirst case which virtually banned new wells in rural areas, instead, he focused on imposing a new \$20-a-ton tax on carbon emissions. The tax rate would increase annually by 3.5 percent plus inflation. The tax would generate an estimated \$1.5 billion in new revenue over the first two years and an estimated \$3.3 billion over the next four years. It would also dramatically increase the cost of electricity and motor fuel in Washington, and raise costs for manufacturers who can't avoid emitting carbon through their industrial processes. State taxes on gasoline would jump by 40 percent, adding 20 cents to the cost of a gallon of gas. This would result in not only higher utility bills, but also higher prices for food, durable products and services.

How many issues are there?

During the 2017 legislative session, a total of 1941 bills were introduced. During the first week of the 2018 session, 1145 bills have been introduced.

Support for Fairs

Four bills have been introduced to support fairs and fair funding. (Really, there are two bills but since each was introduced in both the House and the Senate, there

are four numbers.) One is Department of Agriculture request legislation that update the fair funding statutes. The intent is to update the language, so it matches current practices and delete obsolete language. The second set of bills would divert the state portion of sales tax generated on fair grounds to the fair fund. The Fair Fund was set in statute at \$2 million nearly 20 years ago. It has never increased. It is divided among 65 fairs and youth shows in every county across Washington. (None goes to the Washington State Fair in Puyallup.) The current source of revenue for the fair fund is the general fund. Currently, sales tax goes into the general fund, so the only change is tying the amount to the revenue generated on fairgrounds which helps highlight how fair support rural economic development. This is similar to a bill California passed last year.

Grange Legislative Day

Don't forget to sign up for the Washington State Grange Annual "Legislative Day" on February 6th. Look for the sign-up sheet either on our website or in the January Grange News. This will be a great opportunity to talk directly with your legislators!

Things to remember

If you do not know who your legislators are, find out here: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder>. Find your legislators e-mail address here: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/MemberEmail/Default.aspx?Chamber=H> Legislator phone numbers and office addresses are available on the individual member pages. Links to the member pages can be found on the [House](#) site, the [Senate](#) site or on the [Member Roster lists](#). If you would like to send a message to your legislators regarding a specific bill, you may use the Bill Comments form. Learn more here: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/pbc/>.

Toll-Free Hotline - 1-800-562-6000 allows you to leave a message for your legislators. When leaving a message with the Hotline, please be prepared to give your name and street address. During the Legislative session, the Hotline is open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (Senate) - SHR 4, - 1/15 @ 1:30pm

- SB 6316 - Public Hearing - Concerning the certification and evidence of adequate and available water.

Agriculture & Natural Resources (House) - HHR B, JLOB - 1/16 @ 10:00am

- HB 2740 - Public Hearing - Ensuring that water is available for permit exempt and instream uses.

Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (Senate) - SHR 3, - 1/18 @ 1:30pm

- SB 6278 - Public Hearing - Concerning the use of seed certification fees.
- SB 6279 - Public Hearing - Limiting the application of certain civil penalties to protect landowners from incurring penalties based on the actions of the landowner's lessee.

Selected Bills of Interest

Fairs

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Position</u>
HB 2725 Fairs, youth shows, & expos Updating laws concerning agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions.		Blake	High	Support
HB 2765 Ag. fair funding/sales taxes Ensuring the funding of fairs.		Blake	High	Support
SB 6368 Fairs, youth shows, & expos Updating laws concerning agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions.		Warnick	High	Support
SB 6386 Ag. fair funding/sales taxes Ensuring the funding of fairs.		Warnick	High	Support

Water (Hirst)

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Position</u>
HB 2740 Water/permit ex. & instream Ensuring that water is available for permit exempt and instream uses.		Fitzgibbon	High	
HB 2766 (SB 6316) Water availability evidence Concerning the certification and evidence of adequate and available water.		Stanford	High	
SSB 6091 Water availability Ensuring that water is available to support development.	S Rules 2	Van De Wege	High	
SB 6316 Water availability evidence Concerning the certification and evidence of adequate and available water.	S Ag/Water/Natur	McCoy	High	

Legislative Department

Heather Hansen, Legislative Lobbyist

legislative@wa-grange.org

(360) 943-9911