



## Skagit County - Government Relations Report January 30, 2021

During the third week of the legislative session, the House of Representatives and Senate continue to hold public hearings and vote on bills. In addition to new bill introductions, bills are continuously being revised as they move through the legislative process. As of Friday, January 29, a total of 440 bills have been introduced in the House and 412 in the Senate. As of Friday, January 29, a total of 443 bills have been introduced in the House and 412 in the Senate. Only three weeks remain until the first legislative deadline, February 15, 2021, when all bills must be voted out of their respective policy committees to remain under consideration. Bills that do not meet this deadline will be considered “dead” for this legislative session.

While the Legislature is busy doing its work, the Washington State Redistricting Commission is beginning its bipartisan process to redraw legislative and congressional district boundaries. Every ten years, at the conclusion of the census, two Democrats and two Republicans are selected by the leaders of the Democratic and Republican caucuses in the state House and Senate. The four commissioners then appoint a fifth, non-voting, non-partisan chairperson. The voting members of the 2021 Committee include:

- **Joe Fain**, Senate Republican Caucus Appointee, Former Legislator and President & CEO of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
- **Paul Graves**, House Republican Caucus Appointee, Former Legislator and President of Enterprise Washington
- **April Sims**, House Democratic Caucus Appointee, secretary treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council
- **Brady Walkinshaw**, Senate Democratic Caucus Appointee, Former Legislator and CEO of Grist

This Saturday, January 30 at 10:00am, the Commission will meet to appoint the fifth, non-voting member. It will be a virtual meeting held on Zoom and broadcast on [TVW.org](http://TVW.org). This commission will engage in a public process to seek input and will have until November 15 to draft the new political boundaries.

### Legislative Priorities

#### Skagit County Morgue

Skagit County is requesting \$135,000 in the capital budget for the construction of a new county morgue. This project would greatly increase caseload capacity for the County and provides regional benefit, including increased capacity for soft-tissue donation. Sen. Keith Wagoner (R- Sedro-Woolley) is sponsoring this request in the Senate and Rep. Dave Paul (D- Oak Harbor) is sponsoring the bill in the House. Capital budget request forms were submitted last week. We will confirm that Rep. Paul's office has submitted the online form to capital budget leadership next week. We have scheduled a virtual tour of the Morgue facility on Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, with both legislative sponsors and Coroner Hayley Thompson. This will be an opportunity for the sponsors to glean benefits of the project to share with capital budget leadership in their advocacy efforts.



### Didg<sup>w</sup>álič Wellness Center

Skagit County is a strong advocate for statewide and regional investments in behavioral health. The County supports the Swinomish Tribe's request for \$9 million in capital budget funding to expanding the existing didg<sup>w</sup>álič Wellness Center. The request is part of Phase III of the Wellness Center, which includes the addition of detox, emergency housing, transitional and workforce housing components. GTHGA has drafted a letter of support for the project on behalf of the County; we have shared this letter with the Board for review. Island County will also be jointly signing the letter. Once signatures are finalized, we will send the letter to the Swinomish Tribe lobbyist to distribute to capital budget leadership. Members of the 40<sup>th</sup> LD will be cc'd.

### Re-Appropriate Funds for Sedro-Woolley E&T

Skagit County received \$1.5 million in the 2017-19 biennium and \$6.6 million in the 2019-2021 biennium in funding for the Skagit County Evaluation and Treatment Center. Sen. Keith Wagoner (R-Sedro-Woolley) and Rep. Carolyn Eslick (R-Sultan) relayed that they will ensure these funding amounts are reappropriated; both legislators sit on their respective chamber's appropriations committee. As budget negotiations advance, we will work with other members of the delegation to demonstrate support for the project, likely providing written materials in support of the re-appropriation.

### Levy Certification Timing

Skagit County is putting forward [House Bill 1309](#), which would better align the dates by which the County must certify property tax levies and budget adoption. Currently, the County must adopt the budget before certifying property tax levies for all taxing districts, making compliance impossible. Rep. Carolyn Eslick (R-Sultan) is sponsoring the proposal with Rep. Ramel (D-Bellingham) cosponsoring. Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. County Administrator Trisha Logue testified on behalf of the County in the Finance Committee. Ms. Logue provided excellent and succinct job at explaining the importance of this confusing issue to committee members. You may watch her [testimony here](#). We learned early this week that the Association of County Assessors has adopted this bill as one of their top priorities for the session and will be strongly supporting the bill. This support will be beneficial in carrying the bill forward. On Tuesday, Department of Revenue reached out to Rep. Eslick to indicate concerns with the current proposal. DOR supports the bill concept and has indicated that they would like to help the County to refine the proposal to meet the objective. Ms. Logue, GTHGA, and a representative from the Department met on Friday to discuss requested changes. The Department is proposing a change and will be providing language next Monday; Rep. Frame connected with us to let us know the bill will be moving forward out of her committee.

### ***Other Items***

GTHGA is monitoring the following priority items on your behalf. We will provide updates on these items as legislative action occurs. We will continue to be in contact with you on legislative proposals relevant to these items.

### REET 2 Flexibility

Skagit County requests that the Legislature allows temporary authority for jurisdictions to use REET 2 revenue for affordable housing operations and maintenance. This provision is included in [House Bill 1069](#), sponsored by House Local Government Chair Rep. Gerry Pollet (D-Seattle). The bill was heard in the Finance Committee on Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. The bill has been amended to include limitations on the REET 2 flexibility provisions, only allowing either \$100,000 or 35% percent of REET 2 funds,



whatever is greater, to be used for operations and maintenance. The bill was passed out of the Finance Committee with this provision intact. It has not been moved to the floor; we will need to work on incorporating a floor amendment to remove this provision.

### COVID Relief and Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted local governments and the communities they serve. Funding provided to counties for COVID-19 response is used for essential programs, including local public health, emergency rental assistance, emergency homelessness assistance, and small business economic relief. Skagit County requests that the Legislature continue to provide sufficient funding to maintain COVID-19 response and other essential county functions.

On Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, the House Health Care and Wellness Committee heard [House Bill 1110](#), sponsored by Rep. Marcus Riccelli, which expands Local Board of Health membership to include at least four members. Each member must be selected from the following categories:

- Health care providers/ or practicing health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, and others;
- County public health professionals, including tribal representatives, epidemiologists, and more;
- Consumers of public health residing in the County who have self-identified as having faced significant health inequities, with preference from historically marginalized communities;
- Other community stakeholders, including community-based organizations that work with populations experiencing health inequities and the business community.

The bill sets out requirements for proportions of membership from each category depending on the number of Board of Health members. The State Board of Health must adopt rules establishing an appointment process for nonelected members of the board, though elected officials will still select appointees. Elected official membership must be balanced with non-elected membership. This bill has been offered as a possible method of diverting attention away from the Governor's public health restructure bill, [House Bill 1152](#), also sponsored by Rep. Riccelli. The bill was met with support from community groups, medical professional associations, and other groups that would be added to Board of Health membership in the bill. WSAC has not taken a position on this bill. On Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, the Governor announced that 2 regions are moving to Phase II of his "Healthy Washington - Roadmap to Recovery" plan, the Puget Sound Region (encompassing Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties) and the Western Region (encompassing Thurston, Lewis, Pacific, and Grays Harbor Counties). This announcement has highlighted some of the issues with regionalized approaches and has generated robust discussions amongst legislators and advocates. Neither House Bill 1110 nor House Bill 1152 have been scheduled for executive session at this point.

The FPHS funding proposal associated with this discussion, [Senate Bill 5149](#), sponsored by Sen. June Robinson (D- Everett), was heard in the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee on Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. WSALPO testified in support of this bill; WSAC signed in support of this bill but did not testify. The proposal imposes a covered lives assessment on health carriers, Medicaid managed care organizations, and third-party administrators to be deposited in the Foundational Public Health Services Account. The assessment is \$3.25 per member per month assessment in fiscal year (FY) 2023, \$143,000,000 total in FY 2024, and \$200,000,000 total in FY 2025 and thereafter. Beginning in FY 2024, health carriers, MCOs, and third-party administrators will pay a pro rata share of the total assessment based on their number of covered lives. Carriers are exempt if they cover less



than 50 lives in Washington. By the 2025 – 2027 biennium, the assessment will generate \$400 million/biennium. The bill received a mix of strong support and strong opposition, with support from public health providers, individual counties, healthcare workers, the Department of Health, and the Governor’s office. Unions, business associations, and insurance companies came out in opposition of the bill. While the fee is imposed on health carriers and TPAs, there is significant concern that the tax will be passed down to insurance providers through increased premiums.

In addition to this bill, two other FPHS funding proposals have been introduced:

- [Senate Bill 5020](#), sponsored by Sen. Karen Keiser (D- Kent), which assesses a penalty against drug manufacturers on revenue generated from prescription drug price increases that are unsupported by clinical evidence – i.e. arbitrary price increase on prescription drugs that are not related to increased costs of production. The state Health Care Authority may assess a penalty of 80 percent of the difference in revenue resulting from the price increase. This bill was heard on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, but has not been scheduled for executive session.
- [Senate Bill 5371](#), sponsored by Sen. June Robinson (D- Everett), imposes a statewide sweetened beverage tax of \$.0175/ fl. oz. distributed. 40 percent of the revenue is dedicated to FPHS. 60 percent of the revenue would be deposited into a new Health Equity Account, which must be used to address social determinants of health in communities disproportionately experiencing negative health outcomes. This is modeled after the City of Seattle’s sweetened beverage tax. This bill has not been scheduled for a hearing.

It is unclear which, if any, of these proposals will move forward. We are likely to see further action on these bills later in budget negotiations.

#### Democrats Introduce COVID-19 Relief Proposal

On Tuesday, the House Appropriations Committee heard the House version of the jointly introduced Democrat proposal allocating federal funding for COVID-19 pandemic relief: [House Bill 1368](#), sponsored by Appropriations Chair Rep. Timm Ormsby (D- Spokane), and [Senate Bill 5344](#), sponsored by Ways and Means Chair Sen. Christine Rolfes (D- Bainbridge Island). The bill appropriates federal funding provided by Congress for the remainder of the current fiscal year (June 30, 2021). Distributions are provided for childcare, rent relief, food assistance, developmental disability and senior programs, medical and health care assistance, education, and public health activities, including testing and vaccine distribution. The bill provides \$2.2 billion in total. The bill was passed out of the Appropriations Committee with two technical amendments on Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. The House and Senate versions of the bill have been scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee next Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the House version of the bill has been scheduled for executive session next Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, in anticipation of floor action.

#### Support Capital Budget Funding for:

- Heritage Grant Program
- Washington State Housing Trust Fund
- Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Grants
- Brian Abbot Fish Barrier Removal Board



## Upcoming Events

### **Commerce & Gaming (House) - Virtual, - 2/2 @ 8:00am**

HB 1414 - Public Hearing - Aligning marijuana licensing decisions by the liquor and cannabis board with local zoning ordinances. (Remote testimony.)

### **Environment & Energy (House) - Virtual, - 2/2 @ 8:00am**

HB 1117 - Exec Session - Promoting salmon recovery through revisions to the state's comprehensive planning framework.

### **Capital Budget (House) - Virtual, - 2/2 @ 1:30pm**

HB 1308 - Public Hearing - Expanding apprenticeship utilization requirements. (Remote testimony.)

### **Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual, - 2/2 @ 4:00pm**

HB 1368 - Public Hearing - Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through state actions supported by federal funding. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

### **Civil Rights & Judiciary (House) - Virtual, - 2/3 @ 10:00am**

HB 1412 - Public Hearing - Concerning legal financial obligations. (Remote testimony.)

### **Local Government (House) - Virtual, - 2/3 @ 10:00am**

HB 1241 - Public Hearing - Planning under the growth management act. (Remote testimony.)

HB 1298 - Public Hearing - Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas. (Remote testimony.)

HB 1337 - Public Hearing - Concerning accessory dwelling units. (Remote testimony.)

### **Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual, - 2/4 @ 4:00pm**

HB 1368 - Exec Session - Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through state actions supported by federal funding. (If measure is referred to committee.)

### **Civil Rights & Judiciary (House) - Virtual, - 2/5 @ 8:00am**

HB 1412 - Exec Session - Concerning legal financial obligations.



## Bill Summaries

Outlined below are relevant bills GTHGA is tracking for the County. Bills that are in the “lobbying” category are those that GTHGA is taking action to either advance or stall; bills that are marked as “monitoring” are those that GTHGA is keeping track of but not actively lobbying.

### Lobbying

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>	
<a href="#"><u>HB 1025</u></a> (SB 5006)	<b>Local parks funding options</b> Concerning local parks funding options.	H Finance	Wicks	Support
<a href="#"><u>2SHB 1069</u></a>	<b>Local gov fiscal flexibility</b> Concerning local government fiscal flexibility.	H FINDP2S	Pollet	Support
<a href="#"><u>HB 1152</u></a> (SB 5173)	<b>Comp public health districts</b> Supporting measures to create comprehensive public health districts.	H HC/Wellness	Riccelli	Concerns
<a href="#"><u>HB 1309</u></a>	<b>Levy certification dates</b> Concerning the dates of certification of levies.	H Finance	Eslick	Support
<a href="#"><u>SB 5006</u></a> (HB 1025)	<b>Local parks funding options</b> Concerning local parks funding options.	S Ways & Means	Van De Wege	Support

### Monitoring

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>	
<a href="#"><u>ESHB 1056</u></a>	<b>Public meetings/emergencies</b> Concerning open public meeting notice requirements and declared emergencies.	S State Govt & EI	Pollet	
<a href="#"><u>SHB 1070</u></a>	<b>Housing/local tax revenue</b> Modifying allowed uses of local tax revenue for affordable housing and related services to include the acquisition and construction of affordable housing and facilities.	H FINDPS	Ryu	
<a href="#"><u>HB 1099</u></a>	<b>Comprehensive planning</b> Improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework.	H Exec Action	Duerr	



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<a href="#"><u>HB 1110</u></a>	<b>Local boards of health</b> Concerning the composition of local boards of health.	H HC/Wellness	Riccelli
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1117</u></a>	<b>Comp. planning/salmon</b> Promoting salmon recovery through revisions to the state's comprehensive planning framework.	H Env & Energy	Lekanoff
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1157</u></a> (SB 5390)	<b>Housing supply</b> Increasing housing supply through the growth management act and housing density tax incentives for local governments.	H Local Govt	Bateman
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1201</u></a> (SB 5149)	<b>Found. public health funding</b> Funding foundational public health services.	H Finance	Riccelli
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1202</u></a>	<b>Police misconduct/civil rem.</b> Addressing meaningful civil remedies for persons injured as a result of police misconduct, including by allowing for an award of attorney fees in addition to damages and injunctive and declaratory relief.	H Civil R & Judi	Thai
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1241</u></a>	<b>Growth management act plans</b> Planning under the growth management act.	H Local Govt	Duerr
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1298</u></a> (SB 5221)	<b>Accessory dwelling units</b> Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.	H Local Govt	Vick
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1308</u></a>	<b>Apprenticeship utilization</b> Expanding apprenticeship utilization requirements.	H Cap Budget	Riccelli
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1332</u></a>	<b>Property tax deferral/COVID</b> Concerning property tax deferral during the COVID-19 pandemic.	H Finance	Sullivan
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1337</u></a>	<b>Accessory dwelling units</b> Concerning accessory dwelling units.	H Local Govt	Gregerson
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<a href="#"><u>HB 1362</u></a>	<b>Property tax revenue growth</b> Modifying the annual regular property tax revenue growth limit.	H Finance	Duerr
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<a href="#"><u>SHB 1368</u></a> (SB 5344)	<b>Federal funding/COVID-19</b> Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through state actions supported by federal funding.	H 2nd Reading	Ormsby
<a href="#"><u>HB 1407</u></a>	<b>Fees of county officers</b> Concerning fees of county officers.	H Civil R & Judi	Volz
<a href="#"><u>HB 1410</u></a>	<b>Home foreclosure/taxes</b> Protecting taxpayers from home foreclosure.	H Finance	Volz
<a href="#"><u>HB 1412</u></a>	<b>Legal financial obligations</b> Concerning legal financial obligations.	H Civil R & Judi	Simmons
<a href="#"><u>HB 1414</u></a>	<b>Marijuana licensing/zoning</b> Aligning marijuana licensing decisions by the liquor and cannabis board with local zoning ordinances.	H Commerce & Gami	Goehner
<a href="#"><u>HB 1440</u></a>	<b>Small wireless facilities</b> Bringing innovation and investment to Washington's economy by streamlining the requirements for deployment of small wireless facilities.		Boehnke
<a href="#"><u>SB 5042</u></a>	<b>GMA actions effective date</b> Concerning the effective date of certain actions taken under the growth management act.	S Rules 2	Salomon
<a href="#"><u>SB 5149</u></a> (HB 1201)	<b>Found. public health funding</b> Funding foundational public health services.	S Health & Long	Robinson
<a href="#"><u>SB 5221</u></a> (HB 1298)	<b>Accessory dwelling units</b> Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.	S Housing & Loca	Gildon
<a href="#"><u>SB 5275</u></a>	<b>Intense rural dev. areas</b> Enhancing opportunity in limited areas of more intense rural development.	S Housing & Loca	Short
<a href="#"><u>SB 5390</u></a> (HB 1157)	<b>Housing supply</b> Increasing housing supply through the growth management act and housing density tax incentives for local governments.	S Housing & Loca	Lias





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