



Skagit County - Government Relations Report February 13, 2021

Monday is the first legislative deadline, February 15, 2021, when all policy bills must be voted out of their respective policy committees to remain under consideration. Bills that will continue to advance are those bills that have been approved by a policy committee, those under consideration in a fiscal committee, and bills that are considered “Necessary to Implement the Budget” (NTIB). Bills designated as NTIB are exempt from cutoff deadlines and advance in coordination with budget proposals.

Over the next week, fiscal committees will hold public hearings and vote on bills that have been referred to a fiscal committee because they were determined to have a fiscal impact. These committees include the House Appropriations, Finance, and Transportation committees; and the Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees. Bills referred to a fiscal committee must be approved by that committee by Monday, February 22nd to remain under consideration.

Once bills advance out of both a policy and, if referred, a fiscal committee, they are referred to the Rules Committee in their respective chamber. Bills remain in the Rules Committee until they are selected to be brought up for a vote of the entire chamber of the House of Representatives or Senate. Once a bill passes out of one chamber, it then moves to the second chamber, and the process repeats.

As previously reported, the legislative process has key deadlines that bills need to meet to remain under consideration. Below is an outline of the deadlines for this year’s legislative process:

Session Cutoff Calendar	
February 15, 2021	Policy Committee Deadline
February 22, 2021	Fiscal Committee Deadline
March 9, 2021	Chamber-of-Origin Deadline
March 26, 2021	Opposite Chamber Policy Committee Deadline
April 2, 2021	Opposite Chamber Fiscal Committee Deadline
April 11, 2021	Opposite Chamber Deadline
April 25, 2021	Session adjourns - Sine Die



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. We received confirmation that both forms have been approved and submitted by the project sponsors to capital budget leadership.

On Thursday, GTHGA joined Coroner Hayley Thompson, Commissioner Browning, legislative sponsors, and County staff for a virtual tour of the Morgue facility for Thursday, February 11th. Unfortunately, Sen. Wagoner was not able to attend the tour due to his committee running long, though his legislative assistant Sharra Finley attended in his place. Coroner Thompson did an excellent job conveying the regional benefits and emergent need for the Morgue project.

Didgwálic 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 didgwálic 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. Last week, the Swinomish Tribe submitted their final capital budget forms for this request with a letter of support from the County and Island County attached. Members of the 40th LD were cc'd.

The Senate Behavioral Health Subcommittee hosted a work session on capital budget proposals related to behavioral health on Friday, February 12th. The didgwálic Center was featured in this work session - you may watch the presentation [here](#). This project being featured in this work session is a very good indicator of legislative interest in funding the project.

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 members of the delegation to demonstrate support for the project.

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. The Association of County Assessors have adopted this bill as one of their top priorities for the session and will be strongly supporting the bill. The bill was amended with agreed-upon clarifying language from the Department of Revenue on February 4th. The bill is now in Rules Review to be



pulled to the floor; the bill must advance from the House floor by March 9th to continue being considered.

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 25th. 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 on existing capital projects. The bill is currently in the Rules Review committee, the step before being pulled to the floor for debate. The bill must pass off of the House floor before March 9th to continue being considered.

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.

Public Health Restructure Proposal

Democrats have introduced two key proposals relating to restructuring local public health jurisdictions: [House Bill 1152](#) / [Senate Bill 5173](#), sponsored by Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D- Spokane) and Sen. June Robinson (D- Everett), and [House Bill 1110](#), also sponsored by Rep. Riccelli. [House Bill 1152](#) was introduced as Governor-request legislation establishing regionalized, state-administrated comprehensive public health districts encompassing a population of at least 250,000 individuals, while [House Bill 1110](#) expands Local Board of Health membership to include community representation and prevent elected officials from making up the majority of board composition. Bill proponents and public health stakeholders have been meeting weekly to determine an amenable path forward for both parties, and accordingly, an amended proposal was circulated early this week. The amended bill passed out of committee on Thursday, February 11th. As reported last week, the new proposal amends House Bill 1152 to incorporate Board of Health reorganization provisions included in House Bill 1110 and regionalization requirements have been reworked. The bill is broken into three key components: Regionalization, local Board of Health composition, and formation of a work group.

Regionalization: The proposal retains Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs). Instead of replacing LHJs with regional health districts, the proposal establishes a new, regionalized layer of public health administration called Comprehensive Health Services Districts. Comprehensive Health Services Districts will provide regional coordination between LHJs, identify and administer shared services, and will act as a liaison between LHJs and the state. Funding is allocated to LHJs from the Comprehensive District. Each Comprehensive District will be overseen by an Administrative Officer



and will have a Regional Health Officer, appointed by the Administrative Officer. Regional Health Officers will be employees of the Department of Health. Districts are as follows:

1. Skamania, Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties;
2. Lewis, Thurston, Mason, Pacific, and Grays Harbor Counties;
3. Jefferson, Clallam, and Kitsap Counties;
4. Pierce and King Counties;
5. Island, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, and San Juan Counties;
6. Chelan, Okanogan, Douglas, and Grant Counties;
7. Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Lincoln, Adams, and Whitman Counties;
8. Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin Counties; and
9. Kittitas, Yakima, and Klickitat Counties.

A county with a population over 800,000 may form its own Comprehensive Health Services District by resolution or ordinance. Each Comprehensive Health Service District must have a Board that includes city and county elected officials, the Regional Health Officer, a Governor-appointed Tribal representative, and at least one Governor-appointed representative from one of the following categories, as outlined in House Bill 1110: health care providers/professionals or public health professionals practicing within the region; public health consumers self-identifying as facing significant health inequities or representing historically marginalized communities, and community stakeholders, including representatives working with populations that experience health inequities. Elected officials may not constitute the majority of the Board. There is still confusion regarding the interplay between Comprehensive Health Services Districts and Local Boards of Health, especially for counties choosing to establish their own Comprehensive District. Bill sponsors have admitted this section in particular needs more work.

Board of Health Composition: Local Board of Health membership is expanded and modified so that elected officials may not constitute the majority of the Board. Boards of Health must include city and county elected officials, a Tribal appointee selected by the Indian Health Board, and non-elected officials from the following categories: health care providers/professionals or public health professionals practicing within the region; public health consumers self-identifying as facing significant health inequities or representing historically marginalized communities, and community stakeholders, including representatives working with populations that experience health inequities. Bill proponents have attempted to address counties' concerns regarding non-elected official control over fiscal decisions by limiting decisions changing permit, license, and application fees to elected officials. Board majority provisions will continue to be problematic for many counties.

Work Group: A work group is established to recommend a system of coordination between LHJs, Comprehensive Health Services Districts, and the Department of Health.

- By July 1, 2022, the work group must recommend the system for counties to form Comprehensive Districts.
- By January 1, 2023, the work group must recommend performance measures to track efficiency and effectiveness of LHJs, Comprehensive Districts, and DOH.
- By July 1, 2023, the work group must submit recommendations to the legislature on provision of adequate funding to LHJs and Comprehensive Districts, including funding estimates per capita, revenue source allocation, and adequate funding levels to sustain the state public



health system. Stakeholders have pointed out that this work is duplicative of the Foundational Public Health Workgroup.

Bill proponents and public health stakeholders have been clear that this version of the proposal is a starting place for further discussion. This bill is likely to be negotiated throughout the entire session, including the source of ongoing funding for the proposal. We have heard that amendments will be offered on the floor, rather than in committee, due to committee staff capacity constraints.

Funding Proposals

Despite pushback, legislators remain dedicated to moving FPHS funding proposals forward. The funding proposal introduced in conjunction with House Bill 1152, [Senate Bill 5149](#), sponsored by Sen. June Robinson (D- Everett), was passed out of the House Finance Committee on Friday, February 12th. 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 bill was amended to reduce the initial covered lives assessment cost, gradually increasing the assessment until FY 2026. The assessment begins at \$1.54 per member per month in FY 2022, generating up to \$100 million/fiscal year. By FY 2026, the assessment is \$3.07 per member per month to generate up to \$200 million/fiscal year. GTHGA met with Sen. Robinson early this week who reaffirmed that the restructure proposal will be accompanied by funding.

[Senate Bill 5020](#), sponsored by Sen. Karen Keiser (D- Kent), has also advanced. This proposal assesses a penalty against drug manufacturers on revenue generated from prescription drug price increases that are unsupported by clinical evidence. Revenue generated from the penalty will be deposited into the Foundation Public Health Services Account. Republican members have not supported either funding proposal.

Democrats Introduce COVID-19 Relief Proposal

House and Senate Democrats jointly introduced a 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 provides \$2.2 billion in total and appropriates funding 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 House passed this bill passed off the floor on February 1st with slight adjustments to the business grant program, though there was no change in appropriated funding. After passing out of the Ways and Means Committee the week of February 1st, the Senate debated the bill on the floor on Wednesday, February 10th. Though Republican members attempted to amend the bill, the bill passed the floor without further changes. The bill has now been sent to the Governor for signature.

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

Local Government (House) - Virtual, - 2/15 @ 3:30pm

HB 1232 - Exec Session - Planning for affordable housing under the growth management act.
 HB 1298 - Exec Session - Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.

Appropriations (House) - Virtual, - 2/16 @ 1:30pm

SHB 1099 - Public Hearing - Improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework. (Remote testimony.)
 SHB 1117 - Public Hearing - Promoting salmon recovery through revisions to the state's comprehensive planning framework. (Remote testimony.)

Transportation (House) - Virtual, - 2/16 @ 1:30pm

HB 1502 - Public Hearing - Concerning the procurement and design of electric ferries by counties. (Remote testimony.) (Support)

Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual, - 2/18 @ 1:30pm

SSB 5368 - Public Hearing - Encouraging rural economic development. (Remote testimony.)

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>
<u>HB 1025</u> (SB 5006)	Local parks funding options Concerning local parks funding options.	H Finance Wicks	Support
<u>2SHB 1069</u>	Local gov fiscal flexibility Concerning local government fiscal flexibility.	H Rules R Pollet	Support
<u>SHB 1152</u> (SB 5173)	Comp health districts Supporting measures to create comprehensive public health districts.	H HCWDPS Riccelli	Concerns



<u>SHB 1309</u>	Levy certification dates Concerning the dates of certification of levies.	H Rules R	Eslick	Support
<u>HB 1502</u>	Electric ferries/counties Concerning the procurement and design of electric ferries by counties.	H Transportation	Pollet	Support
<u>SB 5006 (HB 1025)</u>	Local parks funding options 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>
<u>ESHB 1056</u>	Public meetings/emergencies Concerning open public meeting notice requirements and declared emergencies.	S State Govt & EI	Pollet	
<u>SHB 1070</u>	Housing/local tax revenue 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 Rules R	Ryu	
<u>SHB 1099</u>	Comprehensive planning Improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework.	H Approps	Duerr	
<u>HB 1110</u>	Local boards of health Concerning the composition of local boards of health.	H HC/Wellness	Riccelli	
<u>SHB 1117</u>	Comp. planning/salmon Promoting salmon recovery through revisions to the state's comprehensive planning framework.	H Approps	Lekanoff	
<u>HB 1157 (SSB 5390)</u>	Housing supply Increasing housing supply through the growth management act and housing density tax incentives for local governments.	H Exec Action	Bateman	
<u>HB 1201 (SSB 5149)</u>	Found. public health funding Funding foundational public health services.	H Finance	Riccelli	



<u>SHB 1202</u>	Police misconduct/civil rem. 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 Approps	Thai
<u>HB 1232</u>	GMA/affordable housing plans Planning for affordable housing under the growth management act.	H Local Govt	Barkis
<u>SHB 1241</u>	Growth management act plans Planning under the growth management act.	H LGDPS	Duerr
<u>HB 1298</u> (SB 5221)	Accessory dwelling units Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.	H Local Govt	Vick
<u>HB 1308</u>	Apprenticeship utilization Expanding apprenticeship utilization requirements.	H Cap Budget	Riccelli
<u>HB 1332</u> (SB 5402)	Property tax deferral/COVID Concerning property tax deferral during the COVID-19 pandemic.	H Finance	Sullivan
<u>HB 1337</u>	Accessory dwelling units Concerning accessory dwelling units.	H Local Govt	Gregerson
<u>HB 1362</u>	Property tax revenue growth Modifying the annual regular property tax revenue growth limit.	H Finance	Duerr
<u>ESHB 1368</u> (SB 5344)	Federal funding/COVID-19 Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through state actions supported by federal funding.	S Passed 3rd	Ormsby
<u>HB 1407</u>	Fees of county officers Concerning fees of county officers.	H Civil R & Judi	Volz
<u>HB 1410</u>	Home foreclosure/taxes Protecting taxpayers from home foreclosure.	H Finance	Volz



<u>2SHB 1412</u>	Legal financial obligations Concerning legal financial obligations.	H Approps	Simmons
<u>HB 1414</u>	Marijuana licensing/zoning Aligning marijuana licensing decisions by the liquor and cannabis board with local zoning ordinances.	H Commerce & Gam	Goehner
<u>HB 1440</u>	Small wireless facilities Bringing innovation and investment to Washington's economy by streamlining the requirements for deployment of small wireless facilities.	H Comm & Econ De	Boehnke
<u>SB 5042</u>	GMA actions effective date Concerning the effective date of certain actions taken under the growth management act.	S 2nd Reading	Salomon
<u>SSB 5149</u> (HB 1201)	Found. public health funding Funding foundational public health services.	S RecComm	Robinson
<u>SB 5221</u> (HB 1298)	Accessory dwelling units Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.	S Housing & Loca	Gildon
<u>SSB 5275</u>	Intense rural dev. areas Enhancing opportunity in limited areas of more intense rural development.	S HLGDPS	Short
<u>SSB 5368</u>	Rural economic development Encouraging rural economic development.	S Ways & Means	Short
<u>SSB 5390</u> (HB 1157)	Housing supply Increasing housing supply through the growth management act and housing density tax incentives for local governments.	S Ways & Means	Lias