



## Skagit County - Government Relations Report April 3, 2021

Only 22 days remain in the 2021 legislative session, and yet another legislative deadline has come and gone – bills needed to have been approved by their respective fiscal committee in the opposite chamber by Friday, April 2, to remain under consideration.

Once bills advance out of policy and fiscal committees, they are referred to the Rules Committee in their respective chambers. 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. Additionally, there are several bills that are *Necessary to Implement the Budget (NTIB)* and are not subject to cutoff deadlines.

In the remaining days of the legislative session, the Legislature will focus on reconciling differences between each chamber's budget proposals, and differences between bills that passed each chamber with differing amendments. If both chambers have approved identical versions of a bill, the bill will be delivered to the Governor's Office to be signed into law. Bills needed to be agreed upon by both chambers by April 11, to remain under consideration. The legislative session is scheduled to conclude (*sine die*) on April 25.

### 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

### Budget Proposals

The State House of Representatives and the State Senate have each released and passed their respective budget proposals for 2021-2023 operating, capital, and transportation budgets.

The House and Senate will now begin negotiating with one another to reconcile differences and develop final operating, capital and transportation budgets. Generally, if funding is included in both budgets, it is highly likely that it will be included in the final budget that is negotiated and agreed to by both chambers. If funding is included in one chamber's budget proposal, but not the other, it's less certain. In that case, whether funding will be included in the final budget will be determined through budget negotiations in the coming weeks. Much of the final budget negotiations occur behind closed doors, with relatively little public process and are often challenging to influence.



## 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. As previously reported, both the House and Senate proposed capital budgets fully funded the Morgue! The House provided slightly more for the project, \$139,000, while the Senate provided the requested \$135,000. We will not need to do anything to ensure this project is included in the final capital budget.

### Didgwálič 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 didgwálič 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. As we reported last week, both the House and Senate proposed budgets provide a significant amount of funding for the project: \$4.5 million in the House proposed capital budget and \$3.295 million in the Senate proposed capital budget.

### 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 and, due to COVID-19 delays, has requested re-appropriation of these funds. The House and Senate capital budgets both re-appropriate both E&T allocations. We have confirmed this with capital budget staff.

### 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 certify property tax levies for all taxing districts before adopting the budget, 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 passed out of the House unanimously and this week, the bill passed the Senate unanimously on Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>! There were no amendments so the bill will not return to the House for concurrence; instead, it will be sent straight to the Governor's desk for signature. This bill received **no** votes in opposition throughout the entire legislative process.

### ***Other 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 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 continues to wait in the Rules committee to be pulled to the floor. It will need to advance off the Senate floor by April 11<sup>th</sup> to continue to be 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 are advancing the Governor-request public health restructuring bill: legislative vehicle [House Bill 1152](#), sponsored by Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D- Spokane) and sponsored in the Senate by Sen. June Robinson (D- Everett). [House Bill 1152](#) was introduced as Governor-request legislation establishing regionalized, state-administrated comprehensive public health districts. The underlying bill eliminated local public health jurisdictions and gave the state oversight over the newly formed regional comprehensive public health districts. The bill has been amended significantly to mitigate stakeholder concerns. The current version of the bill makes high-level structural changes, including establishing four regional comprehensive public health district centers to coordinate and deliver shared services, creating the Foundational Public Health Services Steering Committee to guide FPHS policy direction and implementation, and establishing the Public Health Advisory Board to monitor and evaluate the public health system. However, there are minimal changes to the function, decision-making ability, and authority of local boards of health.

Local board of health composition requirements continue to be worked on by WSAC, WSALPHO, and bill proponents. In the Senate policy committee, the bill was amended to replace the population-based exemption with an exemption for Counties with advisory committees established prior to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. has requested a grace period during which any county without an advisory board may choose to establish an advisory board rather than changing their local boards of health. So far, bill sponsors have not been amenable to this change. Additionally, WSALPHO is still advocating for a variety of minor changes, including removing the 65 percent funding allocation to shared services to provide more flexibility.

The bill was heard in the Senate Ways and Means Committee this Wednesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. At the hearing, Chair Rolfes expressed her dislike of the bill and suggested implementing a pilot program in Spokane County only. This has not been a possible path forward to date, as bill proponents have opposed limiting the scope to a single county. The bill moved out of the Ways and Means committee without substantive changes. Many counties continue to oppose this proposal; it is unclear if this opposition will stall the progression or significantly change the bill on the floor.

### *Funding Proposals*

As previously reported, both the House and Senate proposed operating budgets provide additional investment in Foundational Public Health Services, fully covering the cost of implementing this bill. The House provides one-time funding totaling \$100 million, while the Senate provides an ongoing \$150 million for foundational public health services. The Senate proposal gradually increases: \$50 million in 2022, \$100 million in 2023, and \$150 per year in 2024 and 2025, funded out of the general



fund. WSALPHO is advocating for the Senate proposal to be included in the final budget, as the funding level is significantly greater and is ongoing.

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.

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**

**Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual, - 4/5 @ 10:00am**

SB 5476 - Public Hearing - Addressing the State v. Blake decision. (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. Bills in the following lists are marked “alive” and “dead” accordingly.

**Alive – Lobbying**

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Position</u>
<a href="#"><u>E2SHB 1069</u></a> <b>Local gov fiscal flexibility</b> Concerning local government fiscal flexibility.	S Rules 2	Pollet	Support
<a href="#"><u>E2SHB 1152 (SB 5173)</u></a> <b>Comp health districts</b> Supporting measures to create comprehensive public health districts.	S Rules 2	Riccelli	Concerns
<a href="#"><u>SHB 1225</u></a> <b>School-based health centers</b> Concerning school-based health centers.	S Rules 2	Stonier	Support
<a href="#"><u>SHB 1309</u></a> <b>Levy certification dates</b> Concerning the dates of certification of levies.	H Spkr Signed	Eslick	Support
<b>Rural public facilities/tax</b>	S 2nd Reading	Tharinger	Support



[SHB 1333](#)

Providing an extension to the local sales and use tax for public facilities in rural counties.

[SHB 1502](#)

**Electric ferries/counties** S 2nd Reading Pollet Support  
Concerning the procurement and design of electric ferries by counties.

**Dead – Lobbying**

**Bill Details**

**Status**

**Sponsor**

**Position**

[HB 1025](#)  
(Dead)  
(SB 5006)

**Local parks funding options** H Finance  
Concerning local parks funding options.

Wicks

Support

[SB 5006](#)  
(Dead)  
(HB 1025)

**Local parks funding options** S Ways & Means  
Concerning local parks funding options.

Van De Wege

Support

**Alive – Monitoring**

**Bill Details**

**Status**

**Sponsor**

**Position**

[ESHB 1056](#)

**Public meetings/emergencies** S Rules 2  
Concerning open public meeting notice requirements and declared emergencies.

Pollet

[ESHB 1070](#)

**Housing/local tax revenue** H Spkr Signed  
Modifying allowed uses of local tax revenue for affordable housing and related services to include the acquisition and construction of affordable housing and facilities.

Ryu

[E2SHB 1099](#)

**Comprehensive planning** S Transportation  
Improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework.

Duerr

[E2SHB 1117](#)

**Comp. planning/salmon** S Rules 2  
Promoting salmon recovery through revisions to the state's comprehensive planning framework.

Lekanoff

Neutral

**GMA/affordable housing plans**

S Rules 2

Barkis



[ESHB 1232](#)

Planning for affordable housing under the growth management act.

[ESHB 1241](#)

**Growth management act plans** S Rules 2 Duerr  
Planning under the growth management act.

[ESHB 1332](#) (SB 5402)

**Property tax deferral/COVID** S Rules 2 Sullivan  
Concerning property tax deferral during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[ESHB 1368](#) (SB 5344)

**Federal funding/COVID-19** C 3 L 21 Ormsby  
Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through state actions supported by federal funding.

[ESHB 1410](#)

**Home foreclosure/taxes** S 2nd Reading Volz  
Protecting taxpayers from home foreclosure.

[HB 1565](#)

**PERS/TRS 1 benefit increase** H Approps Johnson  
Providing a benefit increase to certain retirees of the public employees' retirement system plan 1 and the teachers' retirement system plan 1.

[SSB 5149](#) (HB 1201)

**Found. public health funding** S Ways & Means Robinson  
Funding foundational public health services.

[ESSB 5275](#)

**Intense rural dev. areas** H 2nd Reading Short  
Enhancing opportunity in limited areas of more intense rural development.

[2SSB 5368](#)

**Rural economic development** H Rules R Short  
Encouraging rural economic development.

[SB 5476](#)

**State v. Blake decision** S Ways & Means Dhingra  
Addressing the State v. Blake decision.

**Dead – Monitoring**

**Bill Details**

**Status**

**Sponsor**

**Position**

[HB 1110](#) (Dead)

**Local boards of health** H HC/Wellness Riccelli  
Concerning the composition of local boards of health.



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<a href="#"><u>2SHB 1157</u></a> (Dead) (SSB 5390)	<b>Housing supply</b>	S Ways & Means	Bateman
Increasing housing supply through the growth management act and housing density tax incentives for local governments.			
<a href="#"><u>HB 1201</u></a> (Dead) (SSB 5149)	<b>Found. public health funding</b>	H Finance	Riccelli
Funding foundational public health services.			
<a href="#"><u>2SHB 1202</u></a> (Dead)	<b>Police misconduct/civil rem.</b>	H Rules C	Thai
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.			
<a href="#"><u>SHB 1298</u></a> (Dead) (SB 5221)	<b>Accessory dwelling units</b>	H Rules C	Vick
Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.			
<a href="#"><u>HB 1308</u></a> (Dead)	<b>Apprenticeship utilization</b>	H Cap Budget	Riccelli
Expanding apprenticeship utilization requirements.			
<a href="#"><u>HB 1337</u></a> (Dead)	<b>Accessory dwelling units</b>	H Local Govt	Gregerson
Concerning accessory dwelling units.			
<a href="#"><u>HB 1362</u></a> (Dead)	<b>Property tax revenue growth</b>	H Finance	Duerr
Modifying the annual regular property tax revenue growth limit.			
<a href="#"><u>HB 1407</u></a> (Dead)	<b>Fees of county officers</b>	H Civil R & Judi	Volz
Concerning fees of county officers.			
<a href="#"><u>2SHB 1412</u></a> (Dead)	<b>Legal financial obligations</b>	H Rules R	Simmons
Concerning legal financial obligations.			
	<b>Marijuana licensing/zoning</b>	H Commerce & Gam	Goehner

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[HB 1414](#) **(Dead)** Aligning marijuana licensing decisions by the liquor and cannabis board with local zoning ordinances.

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[HB 1440](#) **(Dead)** **Small wireless facilities** H Comm & Econ De Boehnke  
Bringing innovation and investment to Washington's economy by streamlining the requirements for deployment of small wireless facilities.

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[SHB 1494](#) **(Dead)** **Antidisplacement/prop. tax** H Approps Harris-Talley  
Providing housing safety, security, and protection for Washington families by creating the antidisplacement property tax exemption.

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[SB 5042](#) **(Dead)** **GMA actions effective date** S Rules X Salomon  
Concerning the effective date of certain actions taken under the growth management act.

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[SB 5221](#) **(Dead)** **Accessory dwelling units** S Housing & Loca Gildon  
(SHB 1298)  
Concerning regulation of accessory dwelling units located outside of urban growth areas.

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[SSB 5390](#) **(Dead)** **Housing supply** S Ways & Means Liias  
(2SHB 1157)  
Increasing housing supply through the growth management act and housing density tax incentives for local governments.

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[SB 5463](#) **(Dead)** **Residential prop valuation** S Ways & Means Wilson  
Exempting a portion of the valuation of residential property from property taxation.

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[SB 5471](#) **(Dead)** **Controlled subst. possession** S Law & Justice Padden  
Concerning knowing possession of a controlled substance.

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