

## Skagit County Legislative Report April 22, 2019

Last week the House and Senate completed passing bills from the opposite chamber (i.e. House bills in the Senate; Senate bills in the House) that they intend to approve. Many bills did not move forward and are no longer eligible to advance. The exception to this are bills necessary to implement the budget, which is often undefined because the budget negotiations are ongoing.

For the remaining seven days of session, the legislature will be ironing out differences on bills where the two chambers disagree, and budget negotiators will be continue meeting behind closed doors to develop final operating, capital, and transportation budgets. Because budget negotiations are not open to even rank-and-file legislators, we are largely waiting for the public release of the final budget.

There is speculation that budget negotiations won't be finalized in time to pass a budget by the last day of session, Sunday, April 28th. It generally takes about three days from completion of budget negotiations for the legislature to draft budget bills and supporting documents, brief the caucuses, consider amendments, move the bills through committee and vote on them for final adoption. If that is the case, we should see budget proposals by Thursday or Friday of this week. We are prepared to communicate quickly with your legislators if the final budget does not include the county's request.

This week we also expect the House Democratic Caucus to choose a new Speaker of the House. Prior to the beginning of session, veteran Speaker, Frank Chopp, announced that he would be turning the gavel over at the end of session. Representative Chopp has been the Speaker for the last 20 years, so this transition is a unique event for most sitting legislators.

### Bill Summaries

Attached are the bills that the county has taken a position on this session that are still "alive".

Bill #	Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Position
<a href="#">EHB 1219</a>	Providing cities and counties authority to use real estate excise taxes to support affordable housing and homelessness projects.	House Bill 1219, sponsored by Rep. Amy Walen (D- Kirkland), allows cities and counties to utilize real estate excise tax revenues for affordable housing. The bill passed the House, 74-24 and the Senate, 34-13. The Governor signed the bill into law on April 16 and the bill will take effect 90 days after the regular legislative session concludes (July 27th). Cities and counties have the authority to use up to \$1 million of real estate excise tax revenues for affordable housing under current law, but the authority is scheduled to sunset in June 2019. Before passing the House, the bill was significantly amended. The final version of the bill extends the sunset on the authority to January 1st, 2026, so long as the city or county	Del to Gov	Walen	Support

		documents that it has funds for certain capital projects in its capital facilities plan. The amendment also reinstates the financial cap on the use of REET II funding for affordable housing, limiting the annual amount to either \$100,000 or 25% of available funds not exceeding \$1,000,000. This cap does not apply to jurisdiction that utilized REET II funding for affordable housing prior to June 30th, 2019.			
<a href="#">SHB 1406</a>	Encouraging investments in affordable and supportive housing.	House Bill 1406, sponsored by Rep. June Robinson (D-Everett), would have allowed local jurisdictions to impose a .02 percent credit against the state sales tax to fund affordable housing. The House passed the bill 66-32 and the Senate has not yet passed the bill. However, this bill is necessary to implement in the budget and will continue to be considered throughout budget negotiations. This past week, advocates for the bill received feedback that the fiscal note on the bill was too big to be funded in the budget. Since receiving that feedback, advocates have been exploring alternatives that continue to provide funding to local governments, but reduce the overall fiscal note on the bill. Late in the week, an alternative structure was suggested that would “award” credits against the state sales tax up to a set amount per year for 20 years for affordable housing. A local government could be awarded \$500,000/year for 20 years for affordable housing; the award would be issued in the form of a credit against the state sales tax. Cities could bond against this award. The actual credit rate against the state sales tax would vary and equal whatever rate would allow the city to collect the award amount. The Department of Commerce would review applications from jurisdictions and issue a round of awards. Combined with this new structure, the Legislature could also pass the variation of HB 1590 where cities and counties would split the .01 councilmatic sales tax authority; if after 24 months the city/county does not take advantage of their	S Ways & Means	Robinson	Support

		half, then it would be available to the county/city to impose. It's unclear whether this alternative structure could advance given the limited number of days remaining in the legislative session.			
<a href="#">2SHB 1497</a>	Concerning foundational public health services.	House Bill 1497, sponsored by Rep. June Robinson (D- Everett), integrates foundational public health service standards with current state public health practices. The bill requires that the state modify its priorities, funding allocation, and appropriation to fit the foundational public health service model and repeals prior statutes related to the definition, duties, planning, measurement, and funding of public health programs. The Department of Health, by October 1st, 2020, must present on a series of changes related to the implementation of foundational public health services, including planned delivery models, changes in public health system capacity, and improvements in health outcomes. The bill was signed by the Governor on April 3rd and is effective July 28, 2019.	C 14 L 19	Robinson	Support
<a href="#">EHB 1638</a>	Promoting immunity against vaccine preventable diseases.	House Bill 1638, sponsored by Rep. Paul Harris (R- Vancouver), removes the philosophical or personal objection exemption from the requirement to receive the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine. The bill also requires that a public school, a private school or a licensed day care center receive proof of immunizations before the child can attend the school or center. At one point in the session, the bill was amended to allow allows exemption from other vaccination requirements in certain cases, including: proof of disease immunity through laboratory evidence or a health care provider's attestation of disease immunity, exemption based on "non-responder" status due to no positive antibody response to vaccinations, exemption based on health care providers' attestation to adverse reactions to vaccines in family members, and grandfathering the restrictions for current exempted high school students. Late in session, the bill was amended to remove these additional exemptions. The bill passed the	S Passed 3rd	Harris	Support

		House 57-40 and the Senate 25-22, with mixed bi-partisan support.			
<a href="#">HB 2119</a>	Concerning the distribution of moneys derived from certain state forestlands.	House Bill 2119, sponsored by Rep. Debra Lekanoff (D- Bow), allows a county to pay, distribute, and prorate payments of money from the former Common School Trust Land exchanged into the State Forestlands Trust in the same way that general taxes are paid for the former forestlands subject to the exchange. The bill addresses revenue loss for junior taxing districts (including the Burlington School District) as a result of the state's Blanchard Forest Strategy. Although there are some concerns surrounding the general language of the bill, the bill cannot be drafted more narrowly without becoming special legislation. The bill passed the House 61-31 and the Senate 42-6.	H Spkr Signed	Morris	Support
<a href="#">SB 5505</a>	Addressing the use of local stormwater charges paid by the department of transportation.	Senate Bill 5505, sponsored by Sen. Steve Hobbs (D- Lake Stevens), addresses local stormwater charges, which are paid by the Department of Transportation. As drafted, the bill would require that any fees that are levied by counties to be used solely for stormwater control facilities as they related specifically to state highway runoff, preempting counties from utilizing the funds for other needs. The bill passed through the Senate without amendment.	H 2nd Reading	Hobbs	Oppose