

the Courthouse Journal

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Washington Association of County Officials
Washington State Association of Counties

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Supreme Court Tax Ruling Creates Budget Set Back

On February 3 the State Supreme Court eliminated Washington's inheritance tax in a ruling effective back to January 1, 2002. For Olympia budget writers, the tax case had been a slowly ticking \$430 million time bomb. The Department of Revenue estimates that up to \$150 million will be refunded to estates going back to 2002. The remainder of the loss would occur during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005 and the 2005-07 Biennium.

The ruling was based on the legal link between Washington's tax and the federal tax. The elimination of the federal tax meant that the Washington tax was eliminated by reference. This sort of ruling is relatively rare for Washington. A majority of states have income taxes, and frequently find that changes to their state tax systems are legislated in Washington D.C.

For state budget writers and spending advocates, the ruling ends a brief period of hope. Recently actual tax collections had exceeded the November forecast, leading many to believe the budget could be balanced without large cuts or tax increases. Unfortunately the ruling eliminated just about the same amount of money that was expected from the forecast update.

In a strange twist, the loss from the ruling also equaled the amount of money requested by the judiciary for improved court funding. Several lawmakers privately observed that they were not amused by being asked for \$400 million of new spending one day and being handed a \$400 million increase in the deficit the next.

Judge Dismisses 39 Counties From Election Lawsuit...but Let's Case Go Forward

See full story attached to this Journal...

Attorney General Offers Compromise Public Records Bill

Attorney General Rob McKenna, former King County Councilmember, has offered a compromise piece of legislation in place of **HB 1350**, which would have removed the attorney/client relationship

exemption from the Public Disclosure Act and remove the exemption for over-broad requests as it applies to public records.

HB 1758 and **SB 5735**, companion bills, retains attorney/client privilege, a clear

improvement over the HB 1350, the bill that was supported by the Open Government Coalition. However, the bills do prevent an agency from refusing to respond to a request

because it is over-broad, but as a practical matter most county prosecutors have long advised their clients to work with over-broad requests and try to get people to narrow their requests. WSAC is not aware of any county using the over-broad exemption to refuse to comply with an open records request.

Other important improvements are that a higher burden of proof on an agency is not imposed, the 30-day deadline for producing records is not imposed, the requirement to file PDA action in county of requestor's residence is removed, and the requirement to provide an electronic database is also removed.

Overall, the Attorney-General's bills are a great improvement. There are still some provisions that need to be addressed and WSAC, in cooperation with other local governments, is trying to improve the language.

The Courthouse Journal

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We welcome your suggestions and contributions. The weekly deadline is noon Wednesday.

Direct inquiries and correspondence to *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501-1131 or www.wacounties.org.

WACO STAFF

Phone (360) 753-7319 / Fax (360) 664-2812

Debbie Wilke, *Executive Director*

Michelle Hagen, *Deputy Director*

Christina Bridston, *Programs Coordinator*

Brenda Bamford, *Financial Operations Mgr*

Kathie Houts, *Administrative Assistant*

WSAC STAFF

Phone (360) 753-1886 / Fax (360) 753-2842

Bill Vogler, *Executive Director*

Paul Parker, *Assistant Executive Director*

Maureen Morris,

Urban Counties Deputy Director

Sophia Byrd, *Policy Director-*

Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice

Jean Wessman, *Policy Director-*

Human Services, Juvenile Justice & Housing

Michael Shaw, *Interim Policy Director-*

Transportation & Land Use

Vicki Kirkpatrick, *Policy Director-*

Public Health & WSALPHO Administrator

Tom King, *Research Associate*

Jim Potts, *Coordinator-Housing Outreach*

Tom Robinson, *Coordinator-Timber*

Trina Bannister,

Finance & Administration Director

Ginni Peppert,

Events Planner & Administrative Assistant

Barbara Warden,

Business & Administrative Assistant

Tom Jensen, *Technology Project Manager*

CPO PROGRAM

Julie Kaufman,

Certified Public Official Coordinator

NOTE: Legislative Committee schedules and agendas can be found at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm>

Budget, Finance and Taxes

Assessor's Priority Bills to Receive Hearings Next Week

The three priority bills of the County Assessors' Association will have public hearings next week. **HB 1502** which deals with destroyed property would reinstate the property tax abatement that sunsetted in 2004. It also requires that a structure be involuntarily destroyed in order to receive tax relief. **HB 1502** will be heard in the House Finance Committee, on February 8, at 10:00 a.m. in JLOB - C.

SB 5416 covers the subject of property tax exemption review. It requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to review property tax exemptions every six years. JLARC must review the exemption and submit a report to the Legislature by June 30 of the year of review. The review will not include any tax preferences in effect less than two years. The review must address factors such as the persons directly affected by the preference in effect less than two years. The review must address factors such as the persons directly affected by the preference, the amount and distribution of taxes involved and legislative objectives of the preference. The bill also repeals obsolete statutes related to the 1982 sunset review of tax preferences. **SB 5416** will be heard in the Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee, on February 7, at 10:00 a.m. in JAC - 2.

SB 5465 modifies the taxation of land valued under the open space program. The bill would change the calculation of compensating tax on the farm and agriculture classification of the open space laws.

The compensating tax would go from seven to three years for those who have been in the program for at least ten years. It would also eliminate the twenty percent penalty for all classifications. The bill will be heard at 8:30 a.m. in the Senate Agriculture & Rural Economic Development Committee on Thursday, February 10 in JAC - 3. **Please contact your legislators for their support on all these bills.**

Other Bills of Interest to Assessors Heard This Week

On Monday, January 31, the House Education Committee held a public hearing on **SHB 1484** which would permit a voter-approved county property tax of 75¢ per \$1,000 of value to be used for school maintenance and operations. It is intended to fund collectively bargained cost-of-living supplements for school employees, professional development for educators or extended learning for students. Once imposed, the tax is permanent unless a new petition is submitted by local school districts, and the tax is increased or decreased by voters as requested by the districts. This Committee also held a hearing on **HJR 4202** which would amend the constitution to provide for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize a school levy. The same day, the House Local Government Committee heard **HB 1386** which would increase the surcharge on the Real Estate Excise Tax Affidavits for the preservation of historical documents. **HB 1386** is a WACO priority bill brought forward by the county auditors.

Tuesday, the Senate Government Operation & Elections Committee

heard **SB 5298** exempting certain maintenance and repairs of qualified historic property from the state property tax. The exemption, administered by the Assessor, would be for residential property occupied by the owner when expenditures within the last five years exceed 10 percent of the assessed value. Jefferson County Assessor Jack Westerman testified on behalf of the assessors with their concerns on the bill. Those concerns include local control, and processing of the exemption. The House Finance Committee held a work session on what spending and tax limits are necessary for a bipartisan discussion of tax reforms. The Senate Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee held a hearing on **SB 5274** which establishes a trainee real estate appraiser classification for state licensed appraisers. Linda Owings-Rosenburgh, Clallam County Assessor, testified in favor of this legislation. Owings-Rosenburgh is a member of the Appraisal Advisory Committee for the Department of Licensing. The Senate International Trade & Economic Development Committee heard **SB 5325** promoting economic development and community revitalization. This is commonly referred to as the tax increment financing bill. The 2005 bill appears to be the same bill that moved out of the Senate in 2004. It would expand the program to allow local government to finance public improvements using not only the increased local property tax revenues, but also increase sales and use tax from the increment area and a state match of local revenues up to \$1 million per year, per project. Scott Noble, King County Assessor,

Budget, Finance, and Taxes (continued)

testified, with concerns, that an increase in assessed value does not create additional revenue.

On Wednesday, the House Local Government Committee heard **HB 1195** which revises the rules for vesting of short subdivisions. The bill establishes that for a period of five years following the approval of the short subdivision, the statutes, ordinances, and regulations in effect at the time of its approval shall govern the development of the short subdivision. It also exempts from the five-year vesting limitation those short subdivisions zoned for single-family homes which receive short plat approval on or before the effective date of the act. The Senate Early Learning, K-12 and the Higher Education Committee held a public hearing on **SB 5144** and **SJR 8202** which would provide for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district levies and bonds and amend the Constitution to make it work. The House Capital Budget Committee heard **HB 1413** expanding the criteria for habitat conservation programs. This adds two new categories to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program for farmlands preservation and riparian protection and makes changes to the statutory formula for funding allocations made under the program. It also requires the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to make a payment in lieu of property taxes and an additional amount for weed control for lands acquired using funds from the Habitat Conservation Account. All state agencies acquiring land under the Riparian Protection Account must make these payments. The

Senate Natural Resources, Ocean and Recreation Committee heard the companion bill, **SB 5396** the same day. They also heard **SB 5118** which would allow for the payment in lieu of taxes similarly to **SB 5396**, but would create a category for restoration and enhancement projects by state agencies reducing the unallocated portion of the habitat conservation account. The House Finance Committee heard **HB 1239** expanding the leasehold excise tax exemption for historical property to property which is controlled by a municipal corporation.

Finally, on Thursday, the Senate Government Operation and Elections Committee held a hearing on **SB 5333** expanding the voter-approved regular property tax levies to all districts.

Treasurers/WACO Legislative Recommendation

HB 1240, funding the development of an automated system to process real estate excise taxes (REET), by raising REET fees, was heard by the House Local Government Committee on Thursday. There to testify in favor of the bill was Mason County Treasurer Lisa Frazier, Clark County Treasurer Doug Lasher and Lewis County Treasurer Rose Bowman, chair of the Treasurers' Legislative Committee. A representative of the Department of Revenue was also present to lend support to the bill. The Association of Realtors lobbyist spoke against the bill saying that the cost is really not known, there should be a review of the distribution formula and that there must be a better more efficient way to get the system up and

running. In other words, no agreement looks to be forthcoming with the realtors. Title companies have worked with the treasurers on language acceptable to them.

Hospital District Investments

Thursday, the House Local Government Committee heard **PSHB 1341** and the constitutional amendment it would need, **HJR 4202**, exempting large public hospital districts from regulatory restrictions on investments. The district would have to have annual revenue exceeding \$100 million, of which less than five percent is derived from regular property taxes. Lewis County Treasurer Rose Bowman and Grays Harbor County Treasurer Ron Strabbing spoke against the bill on behalf of the county treasurers and pointed out that unlike private hospitals and private non-profits, these districts operate with public funds and if operating funds are used in the higher yield and higher risk investments and money is lost, the taxpayers will end up footing the bill. State Treasurer's office representatives testified to much the same concerns.

Court Funding Gets Hearing

SB 5454, the Supreme Court's proposal to fund courts, will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee next week on Thursday, at 10:00 a.m., in Senate Hearing Room 1. The bill includes court fee increases, assistance to counties by providing money for indigent defense and juror costs, state assistance with judicial salaries and the creation of local court improvement accounts where half the savings counties realize are earmarked for projects in certain jurisdictions.

County Clerks' Bill Set

HB 1471, the county clerks' bill to remove 1881 language from the statute regarding certification of documents, will be heard next week in the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, February 9, at 8:00 a.m., in HHR B. **HB 1471** also allows for electronic transmission of documents by a means other than telegraph. **HB 1471** is a WSACC and WACO priority.

WACO Legislative Committee Position on Legal Financial Obligations

The WACO Legislative Committee met by conference call on Wednesday and voted to oppose **HB 1358** and **HB 1359**, both dealing with the payment of court-ordered legal financial obligations as not serving the interest of the victims of convicted offenders. **HB 1358** would allow an offender to receive a certificate of discharge and have their right to vote restored if they have fulfilled all the conditions of their sentences but have not paid all the financial obligations. The court would retain jurisdiction for

enforcement but only as a civil judgment.

HB 1359 would reduce the interest rate on legal financial obligations from 12% to the Treasury bill rate plus 2% (currently that would make it about 5%). WACO members wanted House Judiciary Committee members to know that the civil judgment rate is still 12%; LFO interest is not compounded; and that interest may be waived by the court if the offender has been diligent in paying for 24 months. County clerks also noted that a civil judgment (**HB 1358**) did not provide the same payment incentive as the possibility of incarceration. Representatives of the Quaker community and the Lutheran Church favored the bill. Committee members did ask what would happen if a certificate of discharge was granted and the offender felt no compulsion to pay his obligation. There is no provision for that in the bill. Please note that the interest rate on tort judgments (damage in the absence of a contract) was reduced last year to the T-bill rate plus 2% and WACO favors reduction from 12% for judgments awarded against local governments.

Civil Forfeiture Bill Is Pulled

SB 5260, civil forfeitures, was pulled from the Senate Judiciary Committee calendar this week by Senator Adam Kline, the prime sponsor, after Douglas County Sheriff Dan LaRoche and Grant County Sheriff Frank DeTrollo met with him. **SB 5260** would require seizing agencies to send all net proceeds to the state treasurer, instead of the 10% under current law bringing about huge losses to counties. Our thanks to Senator Kline for his understanding.

Contraband Bill Is Inert

SB 5242, a bill to harmonize state correctional facility and local jail statutes in prohibiting possession of weapons by inmates, has been heard in the Senate, but has not been voted out of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Corrections. Please let Chair Senator Jim Hargrove and Senators Regala, McAuliffe, Stevens, Brandland and Carrell know that you support **SB 5242**. It is a WACO priority.

Bills of Interest in House Appropriations

HB 1219, a bill to establish a consortium to buy prescription drugs and would include counties and jails, is being heard on Monday, at 3:30 p.m., in the HHR A. WACO enthusiastically supports **HB 1219** as a hopeful solution to high pharmaceutical costs that are plaguing county jails. Its companion **SB 5471**, was being heard in the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee yesterday. The bills are sponsored by Representative Eileen Cody and Senator Pat Thibaudeau, respectively. **PSHB 1219** may come up in Executive Session on the 9th for a vote. Please encourage your legislators to support **HB 1219** and **SB 5471**.

The Appropriations Committee will also vote on **HB 1046**, limiting the use of the public safety and education account (PSEA), in executive session Monday. WACO testified against the **HB 1046**, asking the committee to study the use of PSEA account before doing away with it and, ideally, restore it to its original intent which was to fund training of law enforcement officers and court computer systems. The

Courts, Public Safety, Law and Justice (continued)

WSP Crime Lab also receives substantial funding from the account. If **HB 1046** passes, all state revenues from fines, fees and forfeitures will go to the state general fund and the monies will no longer be dedicated.

Four Counties Receive Jail Grants

The Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) last month awarded more than \$750,000 in grants to four counties for jail construction/expansion and planning.

The four grantees are: Whatcom County, \$400,000 for construction; Clark County, \$288,439 for construction; Cowlitz County, \$36,561 for construction; and Lincoln County, \$30,000 for planning.

DOC received 15 applications for the grant funding.

Schedules are subject to change- PLEASE check this link <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.htm>

JAC = John A. Cherberg Bldg (Senate) / JLOB = John L. O'Brien Bldg (House)

Bill #	Committee	Description	Time	Location Bldg/Room	Date
<u>SB 5500</u>	Senate Human Services and Corrections	Transfer of Juvenile Proceedings	10:00 a.m.	JAC 1	2/7/05
<u>SB 5165</u>	Senate Judiciary	Expanded DNA – a substitute may be heard	3:30 p.m.	JAC 1	2/9/05
<u>SB 5454</u>	Senate Judiciary	Trial Court Funding	10:00 a.m.	JAC 1	2/10/05
<u>SB 5531</u>	Senate Judiciary	Indigent Defense	10:00 a.m.	JAC 1	2/10/05
<u>SB 5574</u>	Senate Judiciary	Stun Guns	10:00 a.m.	JAC 1	2/10/05
<u>HB 1597</u>	House Judiciary	Surcharge on filing fees for law libraries	10:00 a.m.	JLOB B	2/8/05
<u>HB 1471</u>	House Judiciary	Authentication of Documents – priority bill of the County Clerks and WACO	1:30 p.m.	JLOB B	2/9/05
<u>HB 1542</u>	House Judiciary	Indigent Defense	1:30 p.m.	JLOB B	2./09/05
<u>HB 1219</u>	House Appropriations	Prescription Consortium – WACO priority to assist counties in care of mentally ill in jails – companion bill is SB 5371 heard 2/03/05	3:30 p.m.	JLOB A	2/7/05
<u>HB 1456</u>	House Criminal Justice and Corrections	Altering earned release.	1:30 p.m.	JLOB E	2/8/05
<u>HB 1542</u>	House Judiciary	Hearing on bill “Providing Indigent Defense Services.” (WSAC & Tri-Association priority.)	1:30 p.m.	JLOB - B	02/09/05
<u>SB 5454</u>	Senate Judiciary	Hearing on bill “Revising Trial Court Funding Provisions.” (WSAC supports some components).	10 a.m.	JAC - 1	02/10/05
<u>SB 5531</u>	Senate Judiciary	Hearing on bill “Providing Indigent Defense Services.” (WSAC & Tri-Association priority.)	10 a.m.	JAC - 1	02/10/05

Elections, Licensing and Recording

Chattel Lien Bill is heard

SSB 5204, chattel liens, was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, February 1. The original bill was never considered and the substitute was heard in its place.

The bill states that when a lien has been placed on personal property, and the personal property owner feels the claim is frivolous, made without reasonable cause or is excessive, the personal property owner may file an action in superior court requiring the lien claimant to appear before the court and answer the applicant's allegation. The court must determine if the lien is frivolous, reasonable or excessive, and must remedy the claim accordingly by leaving the lien as it is, releasing the lien or reducing it.

The personal property owner must provide notice of the action filed in superior court to the lien claimant, by registered or certified mail, or personal service.

Additionally, the Department of Licensing is prohibited from transferring title to a vehicle through the chattel lien process until it has documented that the lien has been filed with the county auditor, and that the lien claimant has notified the personal property owner of the lien.

Finally, during a foreclosure proceeding, the lien claimant must notify the lien debtor, by certified mail, of the time and place of any public sale or of the time after which any private sale or other intended disposition of the property is to be made.

Those testifying in favor were Thalia Brown, Dept. of Licensing; Stacy Augustine, Washington Credit Union League and Thad Duvall,

Licensing Committee Chairman for the Washington State Association of County Auditors. Those testifying explained that by putting another step in the license titling process, abuses can be avoided. Titled security interests will not be affected, but stronger language confirming that may be requested. This bill was a result of work done this summer among a group of stakeholders to develop a new process for handling chattel liens.

County Auditors' Privacy Bill

SB 5459, restricting the information on recorded documents is scheduled for a hearing on Thursday, February 10, at 8:00 a.m., in the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee in Senate Hearing Room 2.

The purpose for this legislation is to respond to concerns in the community regarding personal information being included in documents recorded in the auditors' offices that is not a requirement of the document. This bill specifically identifies three types of personal information that shall not be included in documents recorded with the auditors' offices and places the burden to ensure that this information is not included on the preparers of the documents. The three pieces of personal information to be excluded are the social security number of any person referred to in the document, birth date of any person referred to in the document and mother's maiden name of any person referred to in the document.

The WACO Legislative Committee met by conference call in mid-January and voted to support this legislation.

Elections Reform Package

Secretary of State Sam Reed's election reform package has been introduced in both the House and the Senate. They include the following:

SB 5740 and **HB 1752**

Improving procedures for ballot processing and canvassing

SB 5741 and **HB 1755**

Modifying provisions on voters' pamphlets

SB 5742 and **HB 1749**

Strengthening review and correction of county election procedures

SB 5743 and **HB 1753**

Enhancing voter registration recordkeeping

SB 5744 and **HB 1754**

Authorizing county-wide mail ballot elections

SB 5745 and **HB 1750**

Modifying primary election law

SB 5746 and **HB 1748**

Requiring the state to assume a share of primary and general election costs

HB 1751

Requiring absentee ballots to reach the auditor by Election Day

To see the complete text of these bills, visit www.leg.wa.gov

See upcoming hearings on bills of interest on the following page.

Elections, Licensing and Recording (continued)

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JAC = John A. Cherberg Bldg (Senate) / JLOB = John L. O'Brien Bldg (House)

Bill #	Committee	Description	Time	<i>Location</i> <i>Bldg/Room</i>	Date
<u>HB 1363</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Allowing voters to select "none of the above" at general elections	10:00 a.m.	JLOB - D	02/08/05
<u>HB 1389</u> <u>HJR 4203</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Expanding grounds for recall	10:00 a.m.	JLOB - D	02/08/05
<u>HB 1447</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Establishing a pilot project to examine the use of instant runoff voting for nonpartisan offices	10:00 a.m.	JLOB - D	02/08/05
<u>HB 1456</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Changing the primary to the first Tuesday in September	10:00 a.m.	JLOB - D	02/08/05
<u>HB 1604</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Revising various election laws	10:00 a.m.	JLOB - D	02/08/05
<u>HB 1350</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Disclosure of Public Records – WACO will be represented by San Juan Co. Prosecutor Randy Gaylor and Tom McBride, WAPA	1:30 p.m.	JLOB D	2/9./05
<u>HB 1650</u>	House State Government Operations and Accountability	Same as <u>HB 1350</u>	1:30 p.m.	JLOB D	2/9/05
<u>SB 5459</u>	Senate Government Ops and Elections	Restrictions on information on public documents	8:00 a.m.	JAC 2	2/10/05
<u>SB 5132</u>	Senate Government Ops and Elections	Protecting Public Employee Personal Information	8:00 a.m.	JAC 2	2/10/05

General Government Issues

WACO & County Auditor Priority Bills Heard This Week

SB 5458, increasing the surcharge on recorded documents from \$2 to \$5 was heard in Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee on Monday morning. Prime sponsor Senator Paull Shin led off the testimony and was followed by Thurston County Clerk Betty Gould, Kitsap County Auditor Karen Flynn, and Kitsap County Clerk Dave Peterson. Also attending the hearing and signing up in support of the bill were Skamania County Clerk Mike Garvison and Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman. The committee did have questions regarding the amount of money this increase would generate and whether it would be ongoing or sunset sometime in the future. Those

testifying did an excellent job of explaining that it will always be an ongoing process, as the price of technology and equipment continues to increase. Other members voiced concerns about the amount of the increase.

Later that afternoon the companion bill to **HB 5458**, **HB 1386**, increasing the surcharge on recorded documents from \$2 to \$5 was heard in the House Local Government Committee. Prime Sponsor Dean Takko spoke to the bill as being extremely important to county offices, and he testified that he had the opportunity to benefit from the O & M fund while he was in office as the Cowlitz County Assessor. Testifying once again were Thurston County Clerk Betty Gould, Kitsap County Auditor Karen Flynn, Kitsap County Clerk Dave Peterson and

joining them for the afternoon session was Douglas County Auditor Thad Duvall. Also in attendance and signing up in favor of the bill were Island County Auditor Suzanne Sinclair and Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman. The hearing went favorably and the bill has been scheduled for Executive Session next Wednesday, February 9 at 8:00 a.m. If you have members on this committee please contact them and ask them to vote this bill out of committee! The committee members are Geoff Simpson, Judy Clibborn, Mark Ericks, Dean Takko, Lynn Schindler, John Ahern and Beverly Woods.

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Bill #	Committee	Description	Time	Location Bldg/Room	Date
HB 1350	House State Government Operations & Accountability	Regarding disclosure of Public Records	1:30 p.m.	JLOB - D	2/9/05
SB 5459	Senate Government Operation & Elections	County Auditor Priority - Restricting the information on recorded documents.	8:00 a.m.	JAC - 2	2/10/05
HB 1602	House State Government Operations & Accountability	Concerning the denial of a public records request because is overbroad.	1:30 p.m.	JLOB - D	2/9/05

Public Health and Human Services

HB 1290, Restructuring Mental Health Bill Heard

The Rep. Cody bill, **HB 1290**, would restructure the delivery system in mental health. It was heard January 27 before her committee, House Health Care. The primary components of her bill are:

1. deletion of the requirement for county government to provide community mental health services and authorize the state to issue a RFP for any entity to administer some or all community services;
2. elimination of the county-designated mental health professionals and authorize any entity to designate who will administer the provisions of RCW 71.24 and RCW 71.05;
3. elimination of the authority of counties to be licensed service providers unless part of a single-county RSN who wins the contract to provide services in that county;
4. deletion of the requirement that 100% of available resources be distributed to the RSNs;
5. deletion of any minimum population requirement; and
6. making the state the determining authority regarding tribal inclusion on RSN governing boards.

The RSNs agreed that Gary Rose, Timberlands and Fran Lewis, Pierce County would represent all 14 RSNs. Dennis Braddock and Karl Brimmer testified in support of the Cody bill. They maintain they can do that because it won't cost any money to implement so even though it isn't in

the Governor's budget, they can work in support of it. Braddock repeated his old mantra about small counties not being able to handle the requirements, the usual lack of consistency and access, and the bill supporting the MHTF recommendations.

The RSN representatives and Commissioner Mike Shelton did a great job. All three of them covered their respective points very well. Rose especially did an outstanding job - brought the contract to show the committee members who gave him the opening to demonstrate how micromanaged we really were. Commissioner Shelton made outstanding and heartfelt remarks. He does such a great job for counties.

NAMI testified, Eleanor Owen as a private citizen testified, Rick Weaver testified on behalf of the Community Mental Health Council. WSAC staff met with Representative Cody in the afternoon and she will accept amendments fixing the direct service provider and county-designated mental health professional issue. She is wedded to the competitive bid piece.

Coincidentally with the House hearing, Senate Ways and Means did two excellent days of work sessions put together by Tim Yowell. His material was very good and the panels he had put together were also outstanding. Amnon Shoenfeld, King County testified on the nonmedicaid work session on Wednesday, January 26 and Dave Stewart, Pierce County testified on the residential/inpatient work session, January 27. Jess Jamison, Compass Health, testified along with folks from NAMI, Thurston County's

jail administrator, Karen Daniels and Snohomish County's deputy corrections administrator, and a scattering of others. WSAC staff has never seen Ways and Means devote two days to one subject like this.

As a follow-up, on January 28, the WSAC Steering Committee adopted the staff concept paper on County Government and the Local Public Mental Health System.

Puget Sound Health Alliance Unveiled

King County Executive Ron Sims sent out a news release announcing the consortium to improve the quality and cost of health care.

Citing the urgent need to find a regional solution to the health care crisis, leaders of business, government, health plans, and health care professionals unveiled a collaborative effort to improve the quality, efficiency and cost of health care deliver in the Puget Sound area.

The Puget Sound Health Alliance (PSHA), initiated by King County Executive Ron Sims, includes members from public/private regional organizations large and small who will work to increase the quality of care delivered throughout King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

The increase in health care costs in the Puget Sound area mirror national trends. Several studies predict that health insurance costs for typical employers are expected to double by the end of the decade, far outstripping inflation. Other studies show that the quality of the health delivery system has significant room for improvement. Sims said that the magnitude and complexity of the

Public Health and Human Services (continued)

problem threatens the economy and requires bold action on a region-wide scale.

“No one purchaser, plan, or health care professional group by itself is capable of creating the change necessary to decrease waste, improve the quality of care, and decrease the cost trends in the Puget Sound region.” said Sims. “We must harness the collective strength and intelligence of our region to meet this challenge.”

Sims pointed to last year’s report from the King County Health Advisory Task Force as the catalyst for the Alliance. The task force recommended that all key stakeholders in the Puget Sound region – from employers to health

professionals to health plan providers – collaborate to improve the quality and delivery of health care, and to educate people on how to get well and stay well.

Current Puget Sound Alliance participants include King County, Starbucks, Washington Mutual, State of Washington, Group Health Cooperative, City of Seattle, Puget Sound Energy, Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI), Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle Surgery Center, Regence BlueShield, Community Health Plan of Washington, Peter Dunbar, MD, Hope Heart Institute, the Polyclinic, Port Blakely Companies, PacMed, Qualis Health, the Foundation for Health Care Quality and Pierce County.

Together, the current members of the PSHA represent more than 300,000 insured people in the four county-Puget Sound region. The Alliance has the market influence, clinical expertise, and performance measurement systems to align health care financing and delivery systems. The organization’s goals are to: improve the quality of care, slow the rate of increase in health care expenditures in the Puget Sound region; improve the health outcomes for people; improve consumers’ and health care professionals’ ability to become partners in managing health; and ensure collaborative decision-making based on evidence.

Schedules are subject to change- PLEASE check this link <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.htm>

JAC = John A. Cherberg Bldg (Senate) / JLOB = John L. O'Brien Bldg (House)

Bill #	Committee	Description	Time	Location Bldg/Room	Date
<u>HB 1219</u> Public Hearing	House Appropriations	Authorizing a prescription drug purchasing consortium	3:30	JLOB - A	2/7/05
<u>HB 1219</u> Executive Session	House Appropriations	Authorizing a prescription drug purchasing consortium	3:30	JLOB - A	2/9/05
<u>HB 1467</u>	House Children & Family Services	Requiring mandatory reporting of abuse or neglect of a child when discovered by a person connected with specified nonprofit entities	1:30	JLOB - D	2/7/05
<u>HB 1663</u>	House Children & Family Services	Creating the prevention and intervention investment council	1:30	JLOB - D	2/10/05
<u>HB 1524</u>	House Criminal Justice & Corrections	Revising the elements of endangerment with a controlled substance	1:30	JLOB - E	2/8/05
<u>HB 1290</u> Executive Session	House Health Care	Modifying community mental health services provisions	1:30	JLOB - A	2/8/05
<u>HB 1365</u> Executive Session	House Health Care	Concerning home and community services’ case management responsibilities	1:30	JLOB - A	2/8/05

Public Health and Human Services (continued)

<u>HB 1547</u>	House Housing	Expanding programs eligible for housing assistance grants.	8:00	JLOB - D	2/8/05
<u>HB 1629</u>	House Housing	Revising distribution of funds for operating and maintenance of very low-income housing projects	8:00	JLOB - D	2/8/05
<u>HB 1585</u>	House Housing	Authorizing standards for housing for persons who are temporarily homeless	10:00	JLOB - D	2/10/05
<u>HB 1531</u>	House Juvenile Justice & Family Law	Limiting the waiver of counsel in juvenile proceedings	10:00	JLOB - E	2/8/05
<u>HB 1644</u>	House Juvenile Justice & Family Law	Changing the law pertaining to waiver of rights by a juvenile	10:00	JLOB - E	2/8/05
<u>HB 1660</u>	House Juvenile Justice & Family Law	Expanding the definition of "At-risk youth"	10:00	JLOB - E	2/8/05
<u>SB 5612</u>	Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection	Expanding programs eligible for housing assistance grants and loans	3:30	JAC - 2	2/9/05
<u>SB 5442</u>	Senate Health & Long-Term Care	Establishing a joint legislative and executive task force on long-term care financing and chronic care management	8:00	JAC - 4	2/9/05
<u>SB 5288</u>	Senate Human Services & Corrections	Specifying how custodial interrogations of juveniles may be conducted	10:00	JAC - 1	2/7/05
<u>SB 5500</u>	Senate Human Services & Corrections	Specifying procedures for transfer of juvenile proceedings	10:00	JAC - 1	2/7/05
<u>SB 5501</u>	Senate Human Services & Corrections	Authorizing use of lie detector tests on juvenile court services employment applicants	10:00	JAC - 1	2/7/05
<u>Work Session</u>	Senate Health & Long-Term Care	Long-Term Care in Washington State	8:00	JAC - 4	2/29/05
<u>SB 5719</u>	Senate Human Services & Corrections	Regarding an expansion of the community commitment disposition alternative	10:00	JAC - 1	2/7/05
<u>SB 5502</u>	Senate Human Services & Corrections	Regarding juvenile sentencing alternatives	10:00	JAC - 1	2/7/05
<u>SB 5763</u>	Senate Human Services & Corrections	An act relating to the omnibus treatment of mental and substance abuse disorders	8:00	JAC - 1	2/10/05
<u>Work Session</u>	Senate Ways & Means	Low income medical assistance issues	1:30	JAC - 4	2/9/05
<u>Public Hearing</u>	Senate Ways & Means	Governor Locke's proposed budget for human services	1:30	JAC - 4	2/10/05

Boards and Commissions

Two Vacancies on the Municipal Research Council - One WACO and One WSAC Member Needed

There are two openings on the Municipal Research Council, the state agency responsible for funding and policy for the Municipal Research and Service Center. The Council is chaired by Representative Bill Hinkle, former Kittitas County Commissioner. It meets twice a year, once during the WSAC or AWC annual meeting and once during the legislative session in Olympia.

The Governor will appoint from the applicants recommended by WSAC and WACO. If you are interested in serving please forward the following to your respective association:

1. A letter of interest addressed to Bill Vogler or Debbie Wilke
2. Your resume
3. A Gubernatorial appointment form (Available on the Governor's website or from the association offices)

Upon receipt of this information the association boards will send their recommendations to the Governor's office. Please forward your letters of interest as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please call WSAC 360.753.1886 or WACO 360.753.7319.

Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee Needs County Member

Former commissioner Herb Baze was the County's representative (WSAC) on the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee. He was not re-elected last fall so we need a new representative.

The Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee only meets 4 – 5 times per year usually in either the Seatac area or here in Olympia. It was created by Executive Order in 1982 to implement the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in Washington State. Members of the Committee are appointed by the Governor and are juvenile justice professionals, local

elected officials, and knowledgeable private citizens. They represent all sectors of the juvenile justice system and all geographical areas of the state.

The Committee primary function is the administration of federal grant funding and any state appropriation that is directed to them for the purposes of implementing effective methods of prevention juvenile crime. Their mission is the improvement of the quality of juvenile justice and providing policy recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, the Department of Social and Health Services, and other organizations informing the public about juvenile justice issues. One of their most recent focuses has been the Annie E. Casey grant for Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

Please contact Jean Wessman at 360.753.1886 X106 if you are interested in serving on this committee.

Training and Upcoming Events

CPO News and Transitions

Sponsor Organizations:

Washington Association of County Officials (WACO)
Washington State Association of County Officials (WSAC)
Washington Counties Risk Pool (WCRP)
County Road Administration Board (CRAB)
Washington State University (WSU)

The CPO Sponsor organizations, under the advisement of their Board of Directors, have agreed to transition WSU as the lead for facilitating program administration. WSU has offered this resource as part of their sponsor contribution to CPO. What does this mean for CPO? Julie Kaufman, Program Manager, will be an employee of WSU and will remain housed in the Washington Counties Building in Olympia. This transition will be a seamless one that offers more opportunity for CPO to seek outside funding and utilize resources available through WSU. The CPO Sponsors will continue to be the governing body of all program decisions.

The CPO Curriculum Review Committee has been formed and will meet next week to undergo their first round of curriculum decisions and course offerings. From this meeting, a needs assessment will be refined and sent out at the end of February to gather participant input. The course calendar will also be finalized at this time.

Julie Kaufman has returned from medical leave and is now working ¾ time as the Program Manager. She would like to thank everyone for their support and encouragement during her time away.

Upcoming Courses: “Public Meetings and Public Disclosure”

Public Meetings	March 30	Colfax
	March 31	Ellensburg
	April 6	Mt. Vernon
	April 7	Pierce County

Courthouse Ramblings

Larry Erickson, Executive Director of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), is retiring February 28, after 10 years at the helm of the only association of its kind in the nation combining representatives from local, state, and federal law enforcement into a single

body. Prior to taking the position at WASPC, Larry was the Spokane County Sheriff for 16 years. He joined the sheriff's department in Spokane County in 1962 as a part-time civil deputy. During Larry's tenure as sheriff he was elected president of WASPC twice. We all

join together to wish Larry an enjoyable retirement and many great times with his family with no legislative duty!

Calendar of Events

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Information</i>
For your convenience training and workshops are bolded.			
<u>FEBRUARY 2005</u>			
Washington State Association of County Assessors' Legislative Meeting	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	February 1-3	(360) 740-1392
WSAC Board of Directors Meeting	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	February 10	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Luncheon	Phoenix Inn, Olympia	February 10	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Reception	Phoenix Inn, Olympia	February 10	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	February 11	(360) 753-1886
Washington Counties Risk Pool Focus Training "Law Enforcement Issues 2005"	La Quinta Inn & Suites/Conference Center, Tacoma	February 22	(360) 586-7447
Washington Counties Risk Pool Focus Training "Law Enforcement Issues 2005"	Best Western Lake Inn & Conference Center, Moses Lake	February 24	(360) 586-7447
<u>MARCH 2005</u>			
Property Records Industry Association (PRIA) Legislative Conference	Marriott Wardman, Washington D.C.	March 2 - 3	www.pria.us
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 3	(360) 753-1886
Urban County Caucus	Mercato Ristorante', Olympia	March 3	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 4	(360) 753-1886
National Association of Clerks, Recorders and Elections Officials (NACRC) Legislative Conference (with NACo)	Marriott Wardman, Washington, D.C.	March 4 - 6	www.nacrc.org
National Association of Counties' (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference	Marriot Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, DC	March 4 - 8	www.naco.org
'Your Path to the Marketplace'	Pend Oreille County	Mar. 5 – Apr. 16	(509) 447-2401
WA Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners' (WACME) Medicolegal Training	WA State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Bldg, Lacey	March 7-11	(360) 753-7319
Washington State Association of County Auditors' Recording Conference	Red Lion Hotel, Wenatchee	March 15-16	(360) 753-7319
Assn of County Human Services	Skamania County	March 16 - 18	(360) 753-1886
Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF)/Washington Counties Insurance Pool (WCIP) Boards and Insurance Advisory Committee	Red Lion at the Park, Spokane	March 17	(360) 586-0466
WCAA Annual Conference – Winter	Enzian Inn, Leavenworth	March 23 – 25	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 24	(360) 753-1886

Calendar of Events (continued)

WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 25	(360) 753-1886
<i>APRIL 2005</i>			
WACO Board of Trustees' Meeting	Washington Counties Building, Olympia	April 6-7	
16 th Annual National County Government Week		April 10-16	
Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF)/Washington Counties Insurance Pool (WCIP) Ace Committee (HR & Payroll Only)	Yakima Convention Center	April 13	(360) 586-0466
Washington Counties Risk Pool (WCRP) Risk Managers Roundtable, 1- 5 pm	Best Western CottonTree Convention Center, Mt. Vernon	April 13	(360) 586-7447
Washington Counties Risk Pool (WCRP) Spring Board Meeting, 9 am	Best Western CottonTree Convention Center, Mt. Vernon	April 14	(360) 586-7447
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	April 14	(360) 753-1886
Urban County Caucus	Mercato Ristorante', Olympia	April 14	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	April 15	(360) 753-1886
Washington STATE	Sine Die - 59th Legislative Session Ends	April 25	http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm
For meetings and events after April 2005 visit www.wacounties.org and click on Full Calendar			