

the Courthouse Journal

W A C O U N T I E S . O R G

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Washington Association of County Officials
Washington State Association of Counties

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Members Rally for 2008 WSAC Legislative Event

Determined not to let snowbound passes and stormy weather deter them, nearly 115 members converged on Olympia February 6 and 7 to promote WSAC Legislative Priorities and county issues during the Association's 2008 Legislative Rally.

Governor Gregoire and First Gentleman Mike Gregoire welcomed WSAC to the Governor's Executive Mansion again this year for the opening reception Wednesday evening. Both spent a generous amount of time with attendees. The Governor spoke of the effective state and county partnership that responded to the winter storms and the need to not forget those who have been affected. She urged members to help dispel the notion of an economic downturn in our state to avoid a "self-fulfilling prophecy," citing Washington's strong economic figures. The Governor finished her remarks by acknowledging WSAC Executive Director Bill Vogler on his impending retirement and the work he has accomplished on behalf of the association. We extend our thanks to Governor and Mr. Gregoire for hosting WSAC and to the many legislators who joined us for the evening.

In order to provide more time for meetings on the hill the next day, a Legislative Breakfast was held instead of the traditional Rally Luncheon. Transportation Co-Chairs, Senator Mary Margaret Haugen and Representative Judy Clibborn, each spoke about the transportation issues that they are championing this session. Sen. Haugen discussed regional governance authority, maintaining and preserving the transportation network, and an accountability bill for Washington State ferries. She also thanked counties for their work as an extension of state government and praised WSAC staff leadership on the hill. Rep. Clibborn addressed the work of her committee on tolls and the ferries budget bill, which will shift emphasis from design to service and boat preservation. Addressing a bill opposed by the WSAC LSC, Representative Mike Armstrong shared his amendments to **HB 3292** - taping of executive sessions.

The Legislative Steering Committee met and, in addition to their regular agenda, reviewed a current list of helpful/harmful bills for counties. This list will be kept current and is available on WSAC's Legislative and Policy web center.

<http://www.wacounties.org/wsac>

Want to post a job announcement on our website ?

Visit <http://wacounties.org/>

And click on the job pages for format & submission details.

Thank you to all WSAC members, guests and legislators who participated in the Rally and who met to discuss WSAC Legislative Priorities. This annual event continues to grow and remains a productive and effective way to promote county issues to statewide elected officials. We appreciate your involvement and determination in getting to Olympia. Safe travels!

The Courthouse Journal

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Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm>

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

Budget, Finance and Taxes

WSAC Legislative Priority – Economic Development Funding

SB 6797, to provide urban counties with a .09% sales tax credit for public facilities that promote economic development, and **SB 6476**, to increase the .09% sales tax credit for the smallest rural counties, have been referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. If you have members on this committee please contact them for their assistance on securing a hearing for the bills.

REET Bill on Software Purchases

HB 1232, to allow local governments to use real estate excise taxes (REET) to purchase computer hardware and software for capital projects, passed unanimously out of the House Local Government Committee to the Rules Committee. If you have members on the Rules committee please contact them to move the bill to the House floor for action.

“We Have No Money”

Those words have been a common refrain in Olympia. Although legislators have spent weeks scrubbing the Governor’s budget and listening to stakeholder requests for funding or tax breaks, the February 15th Revenue Forecast will make or break the budget. The forecast is used to determine the amount of revenue that is available for the supplemental budget and it is expected to be much less than lawmakers anticipated even a month ago.

Construction activity is slowing significantly. The number of single family permits taken out in the fourth quarter of 2007 was the lowest since the first quarter of 1991. This means less employment as well as less sales tax from construction. And the steady drumbeat of bad news in the housing market will also result in another reduction in real estate excise tax receipts. Add to this increasing unemployment figures and rising energy prices, and no one expects good news.

The only silver lining is that with less revenue, the Legislature is more reluctant to enact tax exemptions that will reduce revenue for the state, and by implication, counties.

Sales Tax Credit for Water Quality Projects Moving Forward

On February 12th, the Senate Ways & Means Committee will hear **SSB 6203** to provide a local sales tax credited against the state’s sales tax to finance water quality and water quantity projects. This bill was amended in the Senate Water, Energy & Telecommunications Committee to add water quantity projects to the list of qualifying uses for the sales tax. Now that the policy of the legislation has been sorted out, the Ways & Means Committee will address the fiscal impact of the bill. With a total of approximately \$40 million state fund money annually being distributed back to counties, the bill will face tough scrutiny by the Committee.

County Treasurers’ Issues

The Treasurers’/WACO request bill, **HB 2986**, cleaning up various statutes with regard to collecting taxes, refunding of taxes, and archaic language, passed out of the House Finance Committee this week with an amendment by Representative Conway. The amendment directs the Assessors’ and Treasurers’ Associations to convene a workgroup with representatives of financial institutions that pay property taxes on behalf of property owners to develop a method to provide all property owners with detailed information about their property tax bill. This stems from a hearing Monday evening on **HB 3140**, Representative Conway’s bill, which would require the county treasurer to send a copy of the property tax bill to all property owners when a bank or other party pays the tax for them. Lewis County Treasurer Rose Bowman, Treasurers’ Legislative Committee chair, and vice chair Ron Strabbing, Grays Harbor County Treasurer, testified against the bill. They stated that the language in the bill is located in the wrong section of the statute and that if the legislature wants to change the current arrangement whereby treasurers attempt to accommodate property owners by sending the tax statement to a person or entity of their choice, then their preferred alternative is to send all tax statements to owners. If the owner wishes the taxes to be paid by someone else, they would be responsible for forwarding the statement to them. Many treasurers already do this. Treasurers who accommodate the mortgage companies and tax

services by sending them an electronic file would continue to do so. Twenty-eight of 39 counties have web sites where the information is available.

Also on Monday the House Finance Committee heard a broad sweeping bill that would create a uniform interest rate for a variety of unpaid state obligations, including property taxes, **HB 3280**. Rose Bowman, Ron Strabbing and Phil Sanders, King County Treasury Manager, testified against the bill, as did WSAC staff. The prime sponsor, Representative Kessler, admitted there are problems with the bill in its current version. She is primarily concerned with interest rates fixed in statute that do not have flexibility to rise and fall with the markets. She also spoke to the fact that people who are unable to pay their property taxes timely are then faced with a high rate of interest which compounds the taxpayer's problems. Although she recognizes the income stream issue it is difficult to tell how much that will play into what eventually happens.

SB 6234, authorizing periodic tax payments by electronic funds transfer, was "merged" into **SB 6185**, allowing treasurer discretion in property tax payment scheduling, and passed out of the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee to Rules. Both of the bills were opposed by the county treasurers. If more than two property tax payments were allowed per year, computer systems would have to be changed, and there is a major concern with the administrative complexity of allowing more than two payments as an option. The bill as it reads now has even more serious implications, as well as conflicting language.

Kitsap County Treasurer Barbara Stephenson, King County Treasury Manager Phil Sanders, and Clark County Treasurer Doug Lasher attended the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee on Thursday, to testify against **SB 6674**, authorizing certain school districts and educational service districts to designate a district treasurer. They had opposed the companion bill, **HB 2954**, last week. The bills originated with King County's investment pool fee structure and King County has been meeting with the school districts to negotiate contractual discussions.

HB 2954 passed out of the House Education Committee with an amendment narrowing the bill to King County only. **SB 6674** passed out of committee, still affecting those counties with a population of 400,000 or more. Both bills are now in Rules Committees.

Rose Bowman and Robin Hunt, Thurston County Treasurer, testified in favor of **SB 6851**, concerning documentation required in order to obtain a real estate excise tax exemption at the time of inheritance, in the Senate Ways and Means Committee this week. The bill allows a surviving spouse to receive an exemption from the real estate excise tax without the required documents if he/she shows a certified copy of the death certificate and signs an affidavit affirming that he/she is the sole and rightful heir to the property. The bill now resides in Senate Rules.

Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice

Legislative Dates to Note:

All bills must be out of the policy committees by end of the day today. Bills in fiscal committees are subject to cutoff on Tuesday, February 12th, and all bills must be out of the house of origin by end of business on Friday, February 19th. The fiscal committees consider proposals that have a fiscal note, usually more than \$50,000, and they include Senate Ways and Means and Transportation and House Finance and Appropriations Committees. All bills are considered "dead" if they fail to meet the cutoff dates but the rules have been waived.

County Clerks' Interests

HB 2465, withhold and deliver authority for payment of legal financial obligations of offenders, has a hold in House Rules but work is being done to get it moving. Its companion, **SB 6193**, was voted on in the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee on Wednesday and is now in Senate Rules. County clerks are encouraged to contact their legislators on the Rules Committees to urge them to "pull" the clerks' bill in each of their respective committees.

HB 2466, the County Clerks' proposal to modify their duties and give the responsibility to petitioners/plaintiffs for publication of notices in dependency actions and actions to dissolve port districts, is in House Appropriations Committee. **HB 2466** will make practices in these cases consistent with other actions brought before the court. **HB 2466** must move out of the House Appropriations Committee by next Tuesday so county clerks should request a hearing by e-mailing Representative Helen Sommers.

SB 6937 would provide that all ex-parte orders must be presented to the court by the clerk. **SB 6937** was introduced Thursday and must be heard and executive action taken by the Senate Judiciary Committee today, February 8, in order to survive the cutoff.

HB 3280, the uniform interest rate, which would have cost victims of crime dearly and counties, too, was heard in the House Finance Committee but has not moved out.

Jury Bills

SB 6555 and its companion **HB 3159** surfaced this week and would require county clerks to notify the Auditor and Secretary of State when a juror is disqualified. This bill brought a mixed reaction from county officials so WACO has no position. **HB 3159** was passed out of the House Appropriations Committee on Thursday, but **SB 6555** did not pass out of committee.

SB 6330, Senator McCaslin's proposal to increase juror pay and have the state reimburse counties, has just today left to pass out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He also proposed **SB 6329** to modify the selection of jurors but it did not get a hearing. **SB 6680**, a bill to excuse jurors over 75 years of age, is still in House Judiciary Committee.

Coroners Corner

Human Remains

SB 6521, human remains, has been referred to Senate Ways and Means while its companion, **HB 2624**, had a hearing in House Appropriations with a hearing at 9:00 a.m. today and is scheduled for executive session on Monday, February 11. The proposal has a cost of \$2 million to establish a state physical anthropologist in the Department of Archaeology. The bills have until Tuesday to pass out of the committees.

Of Interest to Sheriffs

Tribal Law Enforcement

HB 2476, a bill to commission tribal law enforcement to act as general authority Washington State peace officers, took a surprise turn on Thursday when it was pulled from the House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government and Audit and re-referred to the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee is the last stop before it can be voted on by the entire House. **SB 6524**, its companion, appears to still be in the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee. That committee does not meet again before the cutoff.

The Washington State Sheriffs' Association (WSSA) met in Olympia on Tuesday with 18 sheriffs present and later held a press conference at the State Capitol regarding this issue and others. Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo, WSSA President, told the media that the organization opposes **HB 2476** and is pushing for a directive that the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) form a committee to develop a model policy for the commissioning of tribal officers and submit it to the Legislature before any legislation is passed. Sheriff Elfo submitted a survey of sheriffs to the Legislature showing 35 sheriffs in support of the WSSA position. Two were out of state and unavailable for comment.

HB 1030, enhancing the sentence for attempting to elude a police vehicle, is still waiting for hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The proposal was first introduced on February 24th, 2005, and sheriffs are hoping the fourth session is a charm!

SB 6463, an act relating to mandatory overtime of corrections officers, says corrections officers employed in city or county jails cannot be required to work overtime. The same exemption is afforded health care facilities. **SB 6463** was heard in the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research and Development Committee on Tuesday evening. Pierce County Jail

Corrections Chief Rob Masco testified on behalf of Pierce County and at the request of the Washington State Sheriffs' Association with grave concerns regarding the bill. At the present time, the Pierce County Jail is understaffed and involved in intensive recruiting to fill over 20 positions. If [SB 6463](#) is enacted, a situation like the one in Pierce County would result in threats to the health and safety of inmates and personnel alike and ultimately, public safety. The bill may still move out of committee today.

Prosecutor Priority

[SB 6933](#), changing rules concerning the admissibility of evidence in sex offense cases, will be heard today in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill allows prior instances of sexual abuse to be used in current prosecutions as probative evidence. [SB 6933](#) must leave the Committee today to beat the cutoff.

Wrongful Death Legislation

Wrongful death legislation continues to move forward in the Senate and House despite our best efforts, with our 17 public sector partners, to slow it down. [ESHB 1873](#) was passed out of the House Judiciary committee on February 5, heard in Appropriations on February 7th and is scheduled for executive action out of Appropriations on Monday. The Senate version, [HB 6696](#), had a public hearing on in Senate Government Operations and Elections and passed out of committee to Ways and Means the next day. We continue to monitor and testify in opposition to this expansion of liability.

Community Based Mental Health Services

[HB 2654](#), that would create a process for certifying community-based mental health services, passed out of the House Health Care and Wellness committee on to the Rules committee on February 5. Counties testified with concerns that the Medicaid waiver and the mental health state plan needed to be amended under the original language. Representative Hinkle offered a substitute to his bill that directs DSHS to prepare a report on strategies to develop consumer and family run mental health services, including amendment of the Medicaid waiver and mental health state plan.

Elections, Licensing & Recordings

Election Day Voter Registration

[SB 6778](#), Election day voter registration (EDR), was heard by the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee yesterday. Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman; Sean Bouffiou, King County Elections Division; and Shane Hamlin, Office of the Secretary of State; testified against the bill which would phase in EDR. We were notified right before 11:00 a.m. this morning that the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee is meeting at noon today to hear [SB 6778](#), again. There was some confusion when the chair adjourned the meeting mistakenly yesterday and then reconvened about 10 minutes later, as to whether it was protocol or appropriate at that time to continue the hearing. Kim Wyman will be back today, as well as Shane Hamlin. A more comprehensive report will be made later.

Top Two Primary

The Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee passed out [SB 6924](#), adopting primary system in which the top two candidates would qualify for the general elections. This bill would only be enacted if the United States Supreme Court holds I-872 constitutional and reinstates the initiative in its entirety. A decision is forthcoming.

Voter Registration Integrity

The House State Government and Tribal Affairs Committee heard [HB 3159](#), improving voter registration integrity, this week. Clark County Auditor Greg Kimsey testified on the bill with some concerns and suggested language changes. A substitute bill passed out of committee with the changes, but it may still need some work.

Jury Service Notification

Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee

SB 6555, requiring the courts to notify the Secretary of State and county Auditor when a person summoned for jury service does not meet the qualifications of a juror, was heard by the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee. Kim Wyman, Thurston County Auditor, testified with concerns on the bill for some auditors and clerks. Clark County Auditor Greg Kimsey testified in support of the bill. The bill died in committee yesterday as the interested parties could not reach an agreement on amendments.

Ranked Choice Voting

SB 6000, allowing ranked choice voting by cities and local taxing districts, was passed out of the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee to Rules.

Prepaid Postage on Ballot Returns

Senator Morton, the prime sponsor of **SB 6199**, requiring prepaid postage on absentee ballot return forms, asked the Senate Government Operations and Elections Committee this week to turn his bill into a memorial to Congress and ask the Federal government to pay the cost. **SJM 8032** is the result.

Environment, Land Use & Resources

Climate Change

SHB 2797/SSB 6580, Local Solutions to Climate Change/GMA –Addresses the impacts of climate change through the growth management act. As proposed it has four base components:

1. Still adds a new “Climate Change” goal. WSAC remains opposed to this item.
2. Directs CTED to develop advisory climate change response methodologies and estimates to assist counties and cities. Establishes support for and/or a requirement that currently available computer software available to Counties which evaluates a community’s carbon emission "footprint" be modified to include other components, such as current and future vehicle miles traveled.
3. Creates a “Global Warming Mitigation and Adaptation Program” for CTED to fund at least three cities and three counties.
4. Directs CTED to report back to the Governor and the Legislature on how cities and counties are addressing climate change issues, and other possible measures that cities and counties could utilize in land use and transportation planning.

These bills have passed their committee of origins and are now in House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means.

Housing

SHB 2683 – Creates an affordable housing-for-all program that allows counties an opt in provision planning program for housing. It also contains WSAC’s legislative priority for a JLARC study of the Growth Management Act. This bill was scheduled for executive session in House Appropriations today. A hefty \$650,000 JLARC fiscal note will make it difficult to achieve.

Bills to change Washington’s Vesting Laws (**HB 3202/SB 6784**) have now been passed by the committees of origin in both the House and the Senate. On Thursday, February 7th, the WSAC Legislative Steering Committee took a formal position to oppose changing the vesting provisions.

Additional Land Use Bills That Are Moving -

SHB 1622 – Permitting Boundary Review Boards to increase the size of an annexation up to 100 percent.

ESHB 1727/ SB 6727– are similar bills and are Realtors priority bills that provide for consultation and cooperation between cities and counties in the adoption of rules and regulations in UGA's. This bill still has language that is problematic to some counties and needs to be worked.

SHB 2482/SB6240 / HB 2483/SB6283 / HB 2484/SB 6239 are a suite of bills dealing with annexations that are still moving.

SHB 2535 permits counties to place a moratorium on Shoreline Management permits, similar to other moratorium restrictions. WSAC supports.

SHB 2577 provides for the chance to suspend transportation of concurrency requirements in "Regional Growth Centers. WSAC supports.

SHB 2854 obligates the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to submit a report to the House of Representatives and Senate every three years that analyzes compliance with the countywide planning policy requirements of the Growth Management Act.

HB 3200 revises cemetery district petition requirements used in counties by allowing no less than 10 percent of registered voters residing in the proposed district to sign the petition. It also allows county legislative authorities to provide a ballot proposition creating the proposed cemetery district.

Natural Resource Issues

HB 3309 was scheduled for hearing on Monday February 4th at 1:30. The companion bill in the Senate, **SB 6874**, was scheduled for hearing on Tuesday February 5th at 10:00 a.m. These bills implement the agreement negotiated between Ecology, Bureau of Reclamation, Colville Confederated Tribes and the Spokane Tribe in support of the Lake Roosevelt drawdown. The agreement is to allow Lake Roosevelt to be drawn down an extra foot each year, which provides an additional 82,500 acre feet of water for a variety of users. In drought years, an additional 50,000 AF would be released. The bill provides a one time payment of \$2 million to local governments adjacent to Lake Roosevelt to offset negative impacts. The criteria for distributing the funding are to be developed by Ecology in consultation with the affected local governments. Some counties in the affected area have expressed concern about the one time payment when needs may be longer term. Discussion is ongoing by county commissioners.

A preliminary list of Natural Resource related bills which remain alive after this week's cutoff include:

Bills sought by Dept. of Natural Resources

HB 2471 and **SB 6211**: Updating the State's Geological Survey.

HB 2470 and **SB 6214**: Granting DNR increased authority to lease aquatic lands.

HB 2509: Granting DNR increased authority to purchase aquatic lands.

HB 2472 and **SB 6212**: Providing increased recreational opportunities on DNR lands.

HB 2468 and **SB 6249**: Providing an inventory and assessment of urban forests.

Bills sought by the Environmental community:

The two urban forest bills sought by DNR may fare better than two similar but more controversial bills sought by the environmental caucus: **HB 2844** and **SB 6469**.

The environmental caucus will seemingly enjoy more success with its Healthy Kids/Local Farms bill, **HB 2798** which enjoys wide support. The same cannot be said for the two top environmental priority bills both dealing with climate change: GMA Climate Change Impacts, **HB 2797** and **SB 6580**; Greenhouse gas emissions-Green collar jobs, **HB 2815** and BU. These measures, while remaining alive, are meeting resistance due to their costs, the mandatory elements of implementation and worries about job losses.

A forestry related bill, **SB 6679**, sponsored by Sen. Jim Hargrove attempts to offer an alternative to the environmentalists' bill embraced by the Governor. Hargrove's bill adopts a cap and trade system to limit greenhouse gas emissions but

expressly credits the valuable contribution made by the forest products industry in capturing those emissions. Another forestry related bill moving through the process is **HB 2893** which adds a labor union member to the state's Forest Practices Board. Such labor member must be affiliated with a timber industry union.

Flood Relief

The Governor and legislature have both pledged to deal with flood relief, which is particularly important for those SW Washington Counties impacted most severely by the December 2007 storm events. Funding is embodied in **HB 3066** and **SB 6823**. Landowners may be granted some leeway to remove debris without normal permits issued from Department of Fish and Wildlife but that latitude will not be as great as sought by some: **HB 2525**.

Ocean Resources

Three bills dealing with Ocean Resources remain alive and have generated interest from the WSAC Coastal Caucus:

Providing increased protection for Orca Whales: **HB 2514** and **SB 6395**

Providing for the creation of Ocean marine resource committees: **SB 6227**

Increasing the coordination of marine protected areas: **SB 6231**

Water Resources

Various water-related bills remain alive:

Allowing the use of rainwater collection devices: **HB 2584**

Restriction on inter basin water transfers: **HB 2978** and **SB 6348**

Providing funding for the Columbia River Water Delivery Account: **HB 3309** and **SB 6874**

Counties will also continue to monitor the progress on the following miscellaneous bills:

Authorizing Lakes Management Planning: **HB 3146** and **SB 6229**

Authorizing Beach Management Districts: **SB 6508**

Providing certain exemptions from Shell fish Protection District Assessments: **HB 2676** and **SB 6607**

The House and Senate will concentrate on floor action next week but the fiscal committees will hold hearings in committee through Tuesday.

General Government Issues

Synthetic Turf Savings Now Available to Counties

NACo's U.S. Communities is pleased to announce that Fairfax County Public Schools has awarded General Sports Venue/AstroTurf USA ("GSV/AstroTurf USA") a contract for Synthetic Turf, Athletic Surfaces and Related Products. The contract became available for use through U.S. Communities on February 1, 2008.

General Sports Venue is an American owned, Minority Business Enterprise that specializes in providing comprehensive and custom solutions to successfully plan, design, build, and finance synthetic sports fields and athletic venues including AstroTurf branded sports turf products and services. The new contract provides broad access to GSV/AstroTurf's complete line of synthetic turf athletic field products, as well as state-of-the-art track surfaces and Sports Antimicrobial System (SAS) treatments for athletic facilities and locker rooms.

Park and Playground Promotion

Save 14% more on already great product pricing on play system with U.S. Communities' Park and Playground Contract. Gametime is pleased to present a limited time sales promotion available only through U.S. Communities on PowerScope Plus, PrimeTime and Xscape play systems. This promotion ends on March 14, 2008. For more detailed information download the brochure <http://www.uscommunities.org/gpa/lib/pdf/resources/GTMSale.pdf> . For a list of all of the U.S. Communities contract offerings please go to www.uscommunities.org.

Taping of Executive Sessions Bill

On a 5-3 vote, the House State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee passed **HB 3292** to the Rules Committee with a Do Pass recommendation. WSAC would like to thank Reps. Appleton, Liias, and Armstrong for voting against the legislation. WSAC has taken the position of opposing the legislation. Reps. Hunt, Ormsby, Miloscia, Chandler, and Kretz voted in favor of the legislation.

The legislation was initially scheduled for executive session on February 5th, but there were insufficient votes to move the bill out of committee. As a result, another committee meeting was scheduled for February 7th to try again.

Representative Armstrong offered several amendments to the bill, including one to apply the Open Meetings Act to legislative caucus meetings and another to exempt governing bodies representing 100,000 persons or less from the taping requirement. All the amendments failed.

WSAC wants to thank Clark County Commissioner Marc Boldt and Thurston County Commissioner Dianne Oberquell for testifying against the legislation on February 4th.

Drivers Abstract Legislation

This week both the House and Senate Transportation Committees heard legislation to allow the local government risk pools to obtain drivers' abstracts of their employees from the Department of Licensing. Under current law, insurance companies and carriers are allowed to obtain drivers' abstracts on demand. County and city risk pools perform many of the same functions as an insurance company; however, they are self-insured programs. For that reason, the Department of Licensing will not release drivers' abstracts to self-insured risk pools such as the Washington Counties Risk Pool.

HB 3262, sponsored by Rep. Takko, and **SB 6885**, sponsored by Sen. King, gives self-insured risk pools the same treatment as insurance companies. Local governments have the same need for reducing their risk of liability. More importantly, local governments want to eliminate the risk to the public from an employee with a bad driving record. We hope that both bills will pass out of committee by the cut-off on February 12th.

Public Health & Human Services

Regional Support Network Bills

There was action this week on both **HB 2750** and the Senate companion **SB 6404**. These RSN bills in their original form allow private entities to contract as RSNs, state that an RSN that voluntarily terminates its contract is prohibited from serving as an RSN in the future, and require a 180-day notice of intent to terminate a contract as an RSN. The House Healthcare and Wellness Committee passed a substitute that would allow an RSN that voluntarily terminates its contract to serve as an RSN after 5 years and the Senate Human Services and Corrections committee substitute includes the 5 year time period along with the notice of intent reduced to the current 90 days, and adds language providing incentive for non-profits. Both bills were passed on to fiscal committees but are not yet scheduled for hearings at this time.

Transportation & Public Works

Bidding

PSSB 6235 is a bill to change the method to secure consulting, architectural, engineering, or other services via competitive bidding. The proposed substitute is a substantial improvement of the initial bill introduced. Most significantly, the proposed substitute adds other construction-related services to the services that governmental agencies must publicly announce requirements for and negotiate contracts for on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualification for the type of professional services required and at fair and reasonable prices. WSAC still has concerns; we remain opposed.

Concurrency

SB6566/HB2950 address the issue of Concurrency and Impact Fees for Transportation Purposes. Basically, this bill states that the payment of impact fees would constitute an acceptable strategy for meeting concurrency. WSAC is working to allow a county to make this determination and not pre-empt our local decision making authority. Bill has moved from both Senate Government Operations and House Local Government.

County Bridges

It appears that SB 6808/HB 2969, that require counties and cities to maintain, replace or appropriate funds for bridges deemed to be "especially deficient" is now dead. This bill requires that if a county or city has a bridge with a rating of 9 or less (out of 100), the state treasurer would be required to withhold 25 % of their state gas tax revenues until enough revenue is accrued to fund 50 % of the estimated costs to replace the bridge, or rehabilitate it to a rating of 80 or better. WSAC opposes this bill and joined with King County's Linda Doherty in testifying in opposition. The County Road Administration Board also expressed concern over the program administration requirements and policy implications.

Transportation Benefit Districts

HB 3143/SB 6913 would increase the governing body membership for single-county public transportation benefit areas from not more than nine to not more than 11.

Tolls

Bills SHB 1773/SSB 6355 are moving with both the House and the Senate Transportation committees passing. It is expected that the House bill will serve as the vehicle to move this policy forward. This legislation establishes the policy framework for the imposition of tolls on state-owned facilities. Either the Legislature or the Transportation Commission (if so delegated) may impose tolls, including variable pricing, on a facility or corridor. All revenue from a tolled facility or corridor must be used only to improve, preserve, or operate the facility or corridor on or in which it is collected. SHB 1773 is in House rules and ready for floor action. SSB 6355 is in Senate Rules.

TIB

Since the early 1990's, counties that wished to transfer a county road to a state highway, or petition for a state highway to become a county road, would require Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) approval. This legislation, HB 2502, proposes to transfer this authority to the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC). WSAC supports. HB2502 is in Rules and is ready to move to the floor.

Day Labor

SSB 6347 would permit counties with a population of less than 22,000 to be exempt from construction day labor use restrictions. WSAC supports this bill.

Wetland Mitigation Banking

SB 6761 states that the criteria for determining a service area for a wetland mitigation bank must include restricting, with exceptions, the maximum allowable service area to the water resource inventory area (WRIA) in which the bank is located. Most importantly, the Department of Ecology and the appropriate county or city in which the bank is located have final approval for determining the service area for specific banks. WSAC supports.

Association News

Directory Updates

Page 19 Ken Guy's information is incorrect. The correct information is on Page 61.

Page 20 James Buck's (Paul Tanaka's replacement) information is incorrect. The correct information is on Page 62.

Page 45 County Councilman Bob Kelly's email address is incorrect. The correct address is: rkelly@co.whatcom.wa.us.

Page 73 Brian Stacy's address same as Brian Ziegler's (directly below).

Page 82 Deletion – Skamania County / Barb Klinger & Dolores Morgan

Page 82 Corrections – Skamania County / Kirby Richards

PO Box 790

509-427-3850

Fax 509-427-3859

Richards@co.skamania.wa.us

Page 89 Deletion – Skamania County / Marilyn Butler

Page 107 Jim Kropf's address is 7612

Register online for NACo Annual Conference and Exposition

[Jackson County](#) (Kansas City), Mo. is the host of the 73rd NACo Annual Conference and Exposition July 11-15.

Registration and housing information is now online Click [here](#). Don't forget - you can receive \$25 off the regular registration price by registering on-line.

Contact: [Kim Struble](#) · Phone: 202/942-4288

Coming up!

· March 31 deadline for \$2,500 college scholarships applications

Find out how you can help two high school seniors earn \$2,500 for college from the NACo/Nationwide Scholarship Program. Winning applicants must research the amount of money they will need at retirement and describe how to secure their financial future for retirement. Open to high school seniors or graduates (age 20 and under) who are legal U.S. residents and whose parent or grandparent actively contributes to the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. Application and entry must be postmarked no later than March 31. [>>More information](#)

Contact: [Lisa Cole](#) · Phone: 202/942-4270

Register now for NACo's Legislative Conference

NACo's 2008 Legislative Conference will be held March 1-5 at the Hilton Washington and Towers in Washington, D.C.

It's your chance to network with peers, meet with members of Congress and learn about proposed legislation that affects your county. [Click here](#) for registration and housing information. Register online and save \$25 on your registration fee.

Visit the NACo Web site regularly for the latest information about schedules, workshops, educational seminars and guest speakers.

Contact: [Kim Struble](#) · Phone: 202/942-4288

2008 Achievement Awards applications now available

Counties are doing amazing things. NACo's 2008 Achievement Award Program gives national recognition to innovative county government programs that modernize and streamline county government and increase services to citizens. The application deadline is Feb. 15.

[>>More information](#)

Contact: [Deseree Gardner](#) · Phone: 202/942-4228

Training & Upcoming Events

Plan now for National County Government Week, April 6-12

A new booklet is now available with ideas on how counties can celebrate National County Government Week, April 6-12. This is an excellent opportunity to raise public awareness about counties and highlight essential county services and effective programs in your community. This year's theme is "Protecting Our Children." The booklet includes tips for planning activities, showcasing county programs, getting media coverage, involving schools and Members of Congress. [>>More Information](#)

A Few Days Left to Apply for National Leadership Institute

The deadline for applying to NACo's 2008 County Leadership Institute, in New York City May 28 – 31, has been extended to Monday at 5 p.m. WSAC members interested in being considered should submit an Interest Form at <http://wacounties.org/wsac/boards.asp>. Please note that WSAC forwards nominees to NACo, who then selects one participant per state.

Co-presented with New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, the 3½ day course focuses on personal leadership skills and a better understanding of local decision-making. Commissioner Mark Richard, Spokane County, was last year's CLI graduate.

The WSAC Board of Directors has approved to cover the tuition cost of \$1,150 for four nights lodging and most meals. The selected candidate is responsible for airfare, some meals, ground transportation expenses, and incidentals.

For more information about the Institute, visit NACo's website at:

http://www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=Seminars_and_Workshops&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=24838

Washington Counties – [wacounties.org/Calendar of Events](http://wacounties.org/Calendar_of_Events)

Good Things

Almost Time for Washington Counties Scholarships!

County elected officials and employees who have students in their families take note! The Washington Counties' Scholarship Fund is offering five \$3,000 awards to dependent children of county employees who will be enrolled full-time during the 2008-2009 school year in a baccalaureate program, associate degree program or vocational/technical certification program. **On FEBRUARY 15th, complete information and applications will be available on the web at wacounties.org.** *We encourage all students to apply!*

Attachments

Welcome to the U.S. Communities Purchasing & Finance Agency

(U.S. Communities) website <http://www.uscommunities.org/>

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), jointly sponsor the

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities)

Designed in cooperation with an Advisory Board of local government purchasing officials, U.S. Communities pools the purchasing power of public agencies, achieves bulk volume discounts on behalf of public agencies, competitively solicits quality products through a lead public agency and provides a purchasing forum for public agencies nationwide.

You can obtain information on how to contact all U.S. Communities suppliers by telephoning (866) 472-7467 or by sending an email to info@uscommunities.org

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"Results from our internal customer satisfaction survey show that our customers want two things from Purchasing. First save us time in the procurement process and second save us money. When Kansas City, Missouri uses a U.S. Communities contract we save both time and money for our customers."

Ray Burnett,
Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies
Kansas City, MO.