

WEEK of Monday, February 15, 2010

Environmental Community

Hot List for the STATE SENATE

This is the weekly Environmental Community "Hot List" detailing positions on no more than ten of the highest priority issues for the upcoming week. Separate Hot Lists are prepared for the House and Senate and distributed each Monday. At the end of the document, you will find a list of environmental community organizations that contributed to the Hot List. Please feel free to contact me at clifford@wcvoters.org or 206-369-2235, if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Clifford R. Traisman, State Lobbyist, Washington Conservation Voters & Washington Environmental Council

POSSIBLE SENATE FLOOR ACTION

2SSB 5279: Providing safe collection and disposal of unwanted drugs from residential sources.

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- Creates statewide medicine return program provided by drug producers to support law enforcement efforts to reduce prescription drug abuse, support public health efforts to reduce accidental poisonings, and keep waste medicines out of our waters.
- Important public safety and environmental protection measure supported by WACOPS and more than 70 other organizations. Should not impact the cost of medicines as a statewide drop-off program is projected to amount to less than half a penny per container of medicine sold.

SSB 5543: Reducing the release of mercury into the environment.

POSITION: *SUPPORT the Pridemore striker*

- Creates a recycling program for CFLs and other mercury-containing lights from residents who currently have limited or no recycling options across the state.
- The Pridemore striker requires producers to finance a stewardship organization contracted by Ecology or to provide a separate program. As a result of stakeholder negotiations, it caps the amount paid by producers to the stewardship organization and exempts retailers from paying for the program.

SSB 6422: Regarding environmental and land use hearings boards and making more uniform the timelines for filing appeals with those boards.

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This legislation seeks to streamline the process and timelines for environmental and land use appeals. It is part of the Governor's package to improve the efficiencies of the natural resource agencies.
- The substitute ensures that the streamlining efforts also maintain existing levels of public participation and environmental protections. The filing deadlines for appeals that will go to the land use board will stay at 60 days, and all other environmental appeals are given 30 day filing deadlines.

SSB 6656: Energy efficiency financing- Authorizing a local financing tool to fund energy efficiency upgrades and removing financial barriers to implementing conservation programs.

POSITION: *SUPPORT with amendments.*

- This bill allows a Western Washington pilot project for a program that could unlock job-creating potential of making our homes and businesses more energy efficient by allowing municipalities to set up revolving loan programs that overcome the biggest barrier to money-saving conservation projects in Washington --- the lack of up-front financing. Conservation loans are paid back with energy savings through utility or property tax bills.
- Please support amendments that remove the city-wide vote requirement and maintain the superior lien position.

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION

2SHB 1180: Regarding the use of bisphenol A. (a.k.a. The Safe Baby Bottle Act)

Health and Long-Term Care: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- The bill passed the House 95-1 and included a ban on BPA in sports water bottles.
- Please support this bill that includes sports water bottles. Sports water bottles are used by children and pregnant women. A 2009 Harvard study found that drinking from a polycarbonate water bottle increases BPA levels by up to 69%. The Departments of Ecology and Health support banning BPA in sports water bottles because there are safer alternatives.



SB 6547/ EHB 2561: Funding construction of energy cost saving improvements to public facilities.

Ways and Means: Possible public hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- This bill is a referendum to the voters to authorize the state to issue bonds for building upgrades and energy conservation retrofits in schools across the state.
- The JOBS Act will create about 40,000 new jobs while saving school districts millions in energy costs--that's money that can be used for our teachers and improving instruction.

SB 6763: Restricting the sales and use tax exemptions for machinery and equipment used in the generation of renewable energy to local electric utilities or persons contracting with local electric utilities.

Ways and Means: Public hearing

POSITION: *OPPOSE*

- In a compromise bill just last year, the Senate and Governor Gregoire resoundingly approved a two-year extension of the green sales tax exemption at full value, followed by two more years at a 75 percent exemption rate. The sales tax exemption meant the difference for ensuring economically viable renewable energy investments in Washington.
- This legislation backtracks on last year's compromise legislation. In addition, the fiscal note prepared by the Washington Department of Commerce does not estimate costs associated with monitoring these complex energy transactions or revenue to rural counties from these investments.

SB 6851: The Clean Water Act of 2010 funding cleanup of water pollution and other programs necessary for the healthy and well-being of Washington citizens through an increase in the hazardous substance tax.

Ways and Means: Possible public hearing

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

- SB 6851 will put Washington back to work. By increasing the existing tax on Hazardous Substances (levied on petroleum and other toxic chemicals), the state can raise \$450 million per biennium to fund job-creating clean water projects in every district and temporarily provide much needed dollars for the General Fund.
- This bill will create jobs, rebuild local economies, and clean up polluted waterways like Puget Sound and the Spokane River. It is supported by environmentalists, labor, local governments, and the Rebuilding our Economic Future Coalition.



Contributing Organizations

American Rivers ▪ Audubon Washington ▪ Cascade Bicycle Club ▪ Climate Solutions ▪ Conservation Northwest ▪ Earth Ministry Environment Washington Fuse ▪ Futurewise ▪ Heart of America Northwest ▪ The Lands Council ▪ League of Women Voters of Washington ▪ Lutheran Public Policy Office ▪ National Wildlife Federation ▪ Nature Conservancy ▪ NW Energy Coalition ▪ People for Puget Sound ▪ Sierra Club Cascade Chapter ▪ Surfrider Foundation ▪ Transportation Choices Coalition ▪ Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation Washington Conservation Voters ▪ Washington Environmental Council ▪ WashPIRG ▪ Washington Toxics Coalition ▪ Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition