

Bill Room (360) 786-7573
Legislative Hot Line 1-800-562-6000

February 2, 2001

<http://www.wacounties.org>

Bulletin #4

WSAC/WACO LEGISLATIVE RALLY - OLYMPIA

AGENDA

February 14

9:00 a.m.	County Assessors' Committee Meetings	Washington Counties Building
9:30 a.m.	County Auditors' Legislative Meeting	Guesthouse Inn and Suites
10:00 a.m.	County Treasurers' Legislative Meeting	WestCoast Olympia Hotel
11:00 a.m.	County Clerks' Legislative Meeting	WestCoast Olympia Hotel
Afternoon	WACO - Meet with your Legislators	On the Hill
6:00 p.m.	Joint County-City Legislative Reception	St. Martin's Pavilion

February 15

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	WSAC - Lobbying Tips	Washington Counties Building
8:00 a.m.	County Treasurers' Business Meeting	WestCoast Olympia Hotel
8:30 a.m.	County Auditors' Business Meeting	Guesthouse Inn and Suites
8:30 a.m.	County Clerks' Business Meeting	WestCoast Olympia Hotel
8:30-11:00 a.m.	WSAC - Meet with your Legislators	On the Hill
9:00 a.m.	County Assessors' Business Meeting	Aladdin Motor Inn
11:15 a.m.-Noon	WSAC Legislative Update	Olympia Ballroom
Noon- 1:15 p.m.	WSAC/WACO Legislative Rally Luncheon	Olympia Hotel Ballroom
1:30 p.m.	Tri-Association Officers Meeting, AWC/WSAC/WACO	Washington Counties Building
1:30 p.m. onward	WSAC/WACO - Meet With Your Legislators	On the Hill
2:30 p.m.	Washington Counties Scholarship Committee Meeting	Washington Counties Building

February 16

8:00-10:00 a.m.	WSAC Board of Directors	Washington Counties Building
10:00- 1:00 p.m.	WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	Washington Counties Building

LAW & JUSTICE

Hearing Set on Jail Bill: State Would Pay For DOC-Credited Jail Time

SB 5427, which would reimburse counties for jail time served by inmates who are sentenced to the state Department of Corrections(DOC), is scheduled for hearing Wednesday, February 7. The 8 a.m. hearing is before the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee, chaired by Senator Jim Hargrove, who prime-sponsored the bill.

Currently, convicted felons who are sentenced to DOC receive credit against the DOC sentence for the time served pre-trial in the county jail. This amounts to a cost-avoidance for DOC and is costing counties approximately \$34 million per year.

The WSAC Legislative Steering Committee has endorsed this bill. WSAC staff are organizing a panel of various county officials, including commissioners and sheriffs, to testify in support of the bill.

A companion bill in the House, **HB 1262**, has not yet been scheduled for hearing.

911 Bills In Committees

County officials testified last week in favor of **SB 5335**, a proposal to ensure ongoing county operational assistance from the state E-911 office. Numerous other individuals and groups, including hospital districts and the Association of Washington Cities, signed up in support of the bill at the January 29 hearing in the Senate Economic Development and Telecommunications Committee. The committee may take executive action next week.

Pacific County Commissioner Jon Kaino, Pacific County Sheriff John Didion, and Kittitas County 911 Director Steve Reinke participated in the panel of witnesses speaking in support of the bill. The WSAC Legislative Steering Committee endorsed the proposal last fall.

A House companion bill, **HB 1181**, is scheduled for hearing at 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 7, in the House Technology, Telecommunications and Energy Committee. WSAC staff will organize another panel of county officials to testify.

Another 911-related bill, **HB 1477**, is scheduled for hearing at 1:30 p.m., Monday, February 5 in the House Local Government and Housing Committee. This bill would allow counties to impose an additional one-tenth of one percent sales tax to support E-911 operations and facilities. At the request of Kitsap and Pierce counties the WSAC Legislative Steering Committee also endorsed this local option.

Hearings Coming Up On County Law Library Bills

SB 5426 and **HB 1470**, which would authorize counties to impose an additional surcharge on civil filing fees to enhance funding for county law libraries, are being heard in Senate and House committees next week.

SB 5426 is scheduled for hearing at 8 a.m., Monday, February 5, in the Senate Judiciary Committee. **HB 1470** is scheduled in House Judiciary for 10 a.m., Thursday, February 8. These bills provide that the county law library board of trustees and the county legislative body may vote to impose an additional surcharge on civil filing fees to not exceed \$15 for Superior Court and \$6 for District Court.

Each county with a population of 8,000 or more is required to maintain a county law library, which is governed by a board of trustees. Counties may jointly develop and operate a regional law library.

Currently, state statute provides that \$12 of every new probate or civil filing fee collected in Superior Court and \$6 of every civil filing fee collected in District Court is to be used for the support of the county law library. With approval of the law library board and the county legislative body the \$12 fee may be increased to \$15.

“Sheriff” Term

HB 1560, restricting the use of the term "sheriff" and "sheriff's posse," has been scheduled for a hearing in House Criminal Justice & Corrections Committee on February 7, at 1:30 p.m. This measure is a Sheriffs/WACO recommendation. Please contact Brenda Bamford at 360-586-4219 Ext. 124 or bbamford@wacounties.org if you have specific examples regarding the misuse of the term "sheriff" or "sheriff's posse" or are interested in testifying!

Bills to Watch

HB 1560, Police dog service teams, will be heard in the House Criminal Justice & Corrections Committee on February 7, at 1:30 p.m.

HB 1460, enforcing seat belts as a primary action.

HB 1481, authorizing alternative detention and rehabilitation facilities. HB 1481 will be heard in the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee, will be heard on February 9, at 8:00 a.m.

HB 1482, certification of bail bond agents. No hearing has been set.

HB 1483, authorizing bail bond agents to execute bench warrants. No hearing has been set.

HB 1495, siting of treatment facilities for sexually violent predators.

SB 5551, authorizes fire chiefs to get a civil or criminal inspection warrant.

SB 5572, authorizes placement of crime stopper signs in view of specified highway systems.

SB 5597, allowing certain law enforcement officers to transfer retirement service.

SB 5673, safe storage of firearms, makes a person who leaves loaded firearms in the reach of children, guilty of reckless endangerment.

SB 5676, Released prisoners, orders a study of counties to determine the impact of prisoners released from correctional facilities located in that county.

COURTS

The House Juvenile Justice Committee is conducting a work session to provide an overview of Unified Family Courts on Feb 7, at 10:00 am.

The House Judiciary Committee heard testimony on **HB 1264**, a bill that would change provisions regarding municipal court agreements between counties and cities.

Cities that decide to terminate their municipal courts or departments must enter into agreement with the county to provide municipal court services. Under current state law a city that terminates its municipal courts or department may not reestablish a municipal court for ten years after termination. This law has caused an unintended chilling effect on the local partnership between counties and cities to respond to changing local needs and economically efficient courts. The bill says that cities with municipal court agreements with counties would have to provide one year notice of intent to terminate before February 1 of the year in which all district court judges are subject to election.

The bill has been recommended by the Board for Judicial Administration, and is a product of the Project 2001 court reform effort that took place last summer and fall. County elected officials, as well as WSAC staff, participated in the Project 2001 process. The WSAC Legislative Steering Committee has taken a position in support of the proposal.

SSB 5115, Tax warrants, a County Clerks' priority bill, has been moved to the Rules Committee. Clerks are encouraged to contact their legislators on the Rules Committee and ask them to "pull" **SSB 5115**. Senate Rules requires that a bill get two "pulls" (two steps in the process) before it goes to the floor of the Senate for a vote of the entire membership. Clerks are also encouraged to contact their senators and alert them **SSB 5115** is on its way and to enlist their support.

SSB 5070, Jury service, has moved to Senate Rules also. **SSB 5070** leaves the jury term at 30 days. **SSB 5072**, Juror compensation, has moved to Senate Ways and Means Committee. The fiscal note of nearly \$8 million annually for the state for the extra juror pay will undoubtedly slow **SSB 5072** down there. The most commonly heard opinion is that the state simply does not have the money.

SB 5426/HB 1470, Law library surcharge, has a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 5 at 10:00 a.m. The House Judiciary Committee will hear **HB 1470** on Thursday at 8:00 a.m. The County Clerks have supported this proposal in past sessions and will sign in supporting both bills. The additional surcharge does not come out of the filing fees.

SB 5591, Providing for a sole caregiver jury exemption.

SB 5392, emancipation of minors, changes "hearing before a judge" to "judicial officer." The Senate Judiciary Hearing is on Feb 8, at 10:00 am.

HB 1275 was before the House Judiciary Committee on Thursday. This bill instructs the Office of the Administrator of the Courts (OAC) to administer state funds that may be appropriated for improving the operation of courts and to provide support for trial court coordinating councils in each county. It also appropriates \$500,000 to OAC, under direction of the Board for Judicial Administration, to support planning activities by the court coordinating councils.

Court coordinating councils were the brainchild of Project 2001, the court reform effort WSAC members participated in last summer and fall. WSAC supports the creation of court coordinating councils in its 2001 Legislative Priorities. Currently, there is no reason that counties and cities and courts could not independently create court coordinating councils. However, the passage of this bill would empower OAC to facilitate the creation of these councils with administrative and technical assistance, provide seed money for the councils, and provide funding for projects the councils may undertake.

SB 5672, Restitution, mandates that unpaid restitution be paid to the estate of a deceased victim.

HB 1591, Harassment orders, declares orders of harassment do not need to be served on a respondent who has failed to appear if the order is materially like the temporary order and the respondent has been served with the temporary order.

HB 1297/SB 5393, Truancy records, directs removal of truancy records from the Judicial Information System and relieves County Clerks of liability for records or personnel not in their control. **SB 5393** will be heard in the Senate Human Services and Corrections Friday at 8:00 a.m. **HB 1297** is scheduled for February 2 in House Judiciary Committee.

ENVIRONMENT, LAND USE & RESOURCES

Claim Forms for Shoreline Master Program Update Expenses

WSAC is collecting claim forms from counties to reflect the unfunded mandate that has been imposed by the new shoreline rules. To ensure that the Legislature and Governor are fully aware of the costs to counties to complete SMP updates, we are collecting these claim forms and plan to submit them en masse, along with cities. This week WSAC emailed a memo to each board of county commissioners chairman, or county executive, and each county planner explaining the claim form along with an instruction sheet. The claim form and the cover letter are to accompany the claim forms. **PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR SIGNED COVER LETTER AND SIGNED CLAIM FORM TO WSAC BY FEBRUARY 8, 2001.** If your county did not receive the claim form by email, please contact Stacy Connole, WSAC staff member, (360) 753-1886 or intern1@wacounties.org.

Legislators Considering Several Different Approaches To Shorelines Regulation

Several bills have been introduced to affect shorelines regulation. Representative Joyce Mulliken (R-Grant County) has dropped bills to repeal the rules (**HB 1374**) and to require legislative approval of new rules (**HB 1656**).

Rep. Gary Chandler (R-Grant County) has introduced a bill (**HB 1561**), endorsed last year by WSAC, to merge the Shorelines Management Act into the Growth Management Act. A different version of merger is rumored to be under development by some House Democrats.

Representative Hatfield (D-Pacific County) has introduced **HB 1261**, which exempts counties and the cities within them from the new shorelines rules if they meet certain criteria (low population density, 75 percent or more of the land base in resource production or preservation, a small number of shoreline permits issued).

On the senate side of the Rotunda, Senator Ken Jacobsen (D-King County), who chairs the Natural Resources, Parks and Shorelines Committee has introduced two bills. **SB 5378** – a Governor request bill -- does not address the content of the controversial new rules, but

extends the implementation dates by one to three years. **SB 5458**, exempts counties and the cities within them from the new shorelines rules if 75 percent or more of the county land base is in resource production, preservation, or open space. In addition, Senator Tim Sheldon (D-Mason County) has introduced **SB 5684**, to require legislative approval of the new rules. It is a Senate companion bill to **HB 1656**.

The Senate will begin work sessions and hearings on the shorelines bills next week, with a public hearing on all the bills on February 14 at 1:30 p.m. The House is also expected to begin hearing bills on the topic that week.

Ecology Clarifies Use of New Stormwater Manual

In responding to a letter from Mike Shelton, WSAC President, Ecology Director Tom Fitzsimmons recently wrote that, if successful, "the technical guidance contained in the Manual will satisfy multiple regulatory objectives." He added that having a commonly accepted approach should reduce projects and uncertainty over how to address stormwater.

The three-page letter responding to county concerns also indicated that there are different stormwater controls for urban, suburban and rural areas. Although there is a uniform threshold for all projects to be evaluated and uniform flow release and treatment standards, "the Manual allows for the use of different controls (best management practices) to achieve the standards. The appropriate controls will differ for different development situations."

"In all cases the goal is to prevent stormwater impacts at the project boundary. Because of the nature of development in rural areas, it is typically much easier to ensure that stormwater impacts don't go beyond the project boundary using on-site controls without having to resort to more costly engineered controls that are more typical for urban developments."

DNR Offers Community Forestry Assistance Grants

DNR has about \$100,000 available in grant funds for community forestry projects to be completed by May 2002. Funds can be used for a wide variety of projects listed below; \$10,000 is the maximum available per project.

Eligible Project Categories:

- Tree planting and riparian restoration
- Maintenance, including pruning and hazard tree evaluation, removal and replacement
- Developing a tree ordinance, a vegetation resource inventory, or a street-tree master plan
- Education, including research projects and arborist training and certification

Grant applications must be received by 4:30 p.m. on March 8, 2001. For more information, contact Sarah Foster at 1-800-523-TREE.

Ecology Seeks Comment on Programmatic EIS for Instream Flows

Ecology is proposing to develop a programmatic EIS for establishing instream flows. The purpose is to provide information for watershed planning groups to use as they develop strategies for their specific watersheds. The proposal will:

- Provide a comprehensive environmental evaluation of various approaches for identifying instream resources flow needs and help to clarify alternatives;
- Present a broad array of flow assessment methods;
- Discuss environmental tradeoffs and the potential pros and cons of alternative approaches.

The public comment period on the scope of issues runs until February 20, 2001. The web page address for the proposal and related documents is: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/instream-flows/.

House Budget Committees Hear from WSAC on Salmon and Natural Resources Issues

WSAC staff testified twice this week before the House Capital Budget Committee and once before the House Appropriations Committee on various aspects of the Governor's proposed budget for natural resources. The information provided by counties last summer on anticipated implementation costs for the State Salmon Strategy were shared with each committee and provided the basis for much of the testimony.

Twenty-two counties have responded thus far, revealing serious deficits for most planning and programmatic needs, from updates of critical areas and shorelines regulations to stormwater plan development and implementation. Reported cost estimates for developing and adopting shoreline master program updates are about \$5.7 million, a total that is 60% higher for the counties reporting than the estimates modeled by Ecology working with county and city staff in the fall of 1999.

Two areas where the budget proposal meets or comes close to meeting anticipated need are the budgets for work done under **HB 2496** and **HB 2514**. The House Capital Budget Committee was urged to fund or increase the \$64 million proposed for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. WSAC indicated that the twenty-two counties responding to the survey could by themselves use the entire fund balance for projects to improve fish passage, restore and acquire habitat.

The biggest problem with the proposed budgets is the near total lack of funding for stormwater management (both planning and capital).

HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH & SOLID WASTE

Public Hearings for week of February 5th

Senate Environment, Energy & Water: 2/6/01, 3:30 pm, SHR 1 (Also on TVW)

SB 5231 - Requiring the treatment of biomedical waste cultures and stocks prior to disposal.

House Health Care: 2/9/01, 10:00 am, HHR C

This is Prescription Drug Day in the House Health Care Committee.

Senate Agriculture & International Trade: 2/7/01, 8:30 am, SHR 3

SB 5675 - Regarding food service regulation

Senate Environment, Energy & Water: 2/6/01, 3:30 pm, SHR 1 (Also on TVW)

SB 5231 - Requiring the treatment of biomedical waste cultures and stocks prior to disposal.

Bills of Interest to Public Health and Solid Waste

HB 1411 - Providing public notice of releases of hazardous substances.

Declares that because releases of hazardous substances can adversely affect the health and welfare of the public, the environment, and property values, it is in the public interest that affected communities be notified of where historic and current releases of hazardous substances have occurred and what is being done to clean them up. Requires any owner or operator of a facility who knows or reasonably should have known that a release of a hazardous substance has occurred at the facility to issue a public notice that the release has occurred and shall describe the remedial actions that are being taken to address the release. The public notice shall be issued within sixty days of the discovery of the release.

HB 1533 - Regarding food Service Regulation (Companion Bill SB 5675)

Declares the purpose of this act is to establish a study of the state's food service rules and objectives to ensure a continuation of the industry's role as a nationally recognized leader in food safety. Directs the secretary of health to create a committee on food service regulation. The committee would consist of the secretary or her designee as Chair; four representatives of various segments of the food services industry; four representatives of local health jurisdictions; two members of a labor organization representing employees in the food service industry on a statewide basis. Provides that the committee, among other things, will recommend: "revisions that should be made to the food service rules that further describe the requirements of the rules or otherwise clarify the rules in a manner that will likely provide uniform interpretation of the rules throughout the state; and ...Which rules should apply uniformly throughout the state without local variation." Requires the committee to report its recommendations to the legislature and to the State Board of Health by July 1, 2002. Expires December 31, 2002.

SB 5603 - Providing for citizen enforcement of health and environmental laws.

Provides that any citizen may commence a civil action on his or her own behalf against any person who is alleged to have violated an environmental or public health standard or requirement, or an order issued by a governmental agency with respect to such a standard or requirement, if there is evidence of more than one day or instance of violation.

HB 1549 - Limiting minors' Access to Tobacco (Companion Bill: **SB 5296**)

Declares that, beginning January 1, 2002, self-service displays of tobacco products are prohibited. All in-store tobacco products must be sold from behind the counter or from within locked display units. Does not apply to retailers who sell tobacco products exclusively. Does not apply to sales from within the premises where minors are prohibited by statute.

SB 5679 - Creating the HIV/AIDS Prevention Study Committee.

Requires the committee to submit a report of its findings and propose specific recommendations to update the AIDS Omnibus Act to the Washington State Legislature in January 2002.

SB 5716 - Providing guidelines for recycling and waste reduction.

Directs the Department of General Administration to work with commercial and industrial construction industry organizations and recycle and refuse haulers to develop guidelines for implementing on-site construction waste management planning. The topics addressed in the guidelines shall include, but shall not be limited to: (1) Standards for identifying the type of wastes generated during construction; (2) Methods for analyzing the availability and cost-effectiveness of recycling services for each type of waste; (3) Methods for evaluating construction waste management alternatives given limited recycling services in rural areas of the state; (4) Strategies to maximize reuse and recycling of wastes and minimize landfill disposal; (5) Standardized formats for on-site construction waste management planning and reporting documents; and (6) A training and technical assistance plan for public and private building owners and construction industry members, in order to facilitate incorporation of waste management planning and recycling into standard construction industry practice.

HUMAN SERVICES, JUVENILE JUSTICE & HOUSING

Human Services, Juvenile Justice, and Housing Hearings of Interest the Week of February 5 – 9

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

February 7, 3:30 pm

2001-2003 DSHS Operating Budget

HOUSE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**February 5, 1:30 pm**HB 1252, exempting faith-based chemical dependency treatment programs from state regulationHB 1338, creating a developmental disabilities ombudsman**February 7, 9:00**HB1659, creating a pilot project for community-based public-private partnership for persons with DD**HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONS****February 9, 8:00 am**HB 1370, restricting the sale of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, or phenylpropanolamine**HOUSE HEALTH CARE****February 6, 1:30 pm**HB 1318, providing for involuntary outpatient psychiatric treatmentHB 1232, changing procedures relating to administrative costs of mental health servicesHB 1650, requiring monitoring of the performance of the community mental health service delivery systemHB 1390, continuing health care benefits for individuals with disabilities**February 8, 6:00 pm**HB 1637, enhancing the wages and benefits of long-term care workers providing care to the elderly and disabledHB 1576, improving the quality of in-home long-term care services provided by state-funded individual providers**HOUSE JUDICIARY****February 6, 1:30 pm**HB 1484, modifying provisions relating to juveniles and firearms**HOUSE JUVENILE JUSTICE****February 6, 8:00 am**

Overview of the Risk Assessment Tools at the Local Courts and JRA

Overview of the Racial Disproportionality Study

HB 1337, revising the chemical dependency disposition alternative**February 7, 10:00 am**

Overview of Unified Family Court

SENATE HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE**February 5, 1:30 pm**SB 5504, allowing dental hygienists to provide preventive oral health services to low-income and functionally disabled persons**February, 7 1:30**SB 5473, creating a developmental disabilities ombudsman**SENATE HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS****February 9, 8:00 am**SB 5468, revising the chemical dependency disposition alternativeSB 5522, creating an office of mental health ombudsman**SENATE WAYS & MEANS****February 6, 1:30**

Work Session on Medical Assistance caseload and expenditure trends

TAXATION, BUDGET & FINANCE**Property Taxes**

There are so many property tax bills being introduced this session that it isn't practical to try to provide summaries of all of them in the *Legislative Bulletin*. We know assessors and treasurers have been concerned because they have been asked for help with fiscal notes on some of these measures and were surprised to learn about some of the measures that have been introduced. Even though a local fiscal note has been requested on a bill, that does not mean that the bill will receive a hearing or that it is under serious consideration by the Legislature. A majority of the bills which you have been asked about will be set aside. On the other hand, it is important to develop good numbers for the notes, so if any of these bills are scheduled for a hearing, we are able to point to the local fiscal impact and argue that the Legislature needs to pay for any revenue losses or additional administrative expenses.

Forest Patrol Assessments

There are two departmental request bills that have been introduced on Forest Patrol Assessment. The first from the Department of

Natural Resources (DNR) simply changes the number of parcels from two to four, before a landowner is eligible for a refund under the existing provisions of the law. The second bill is introduced at the request of the Office of Financial Management, and repeals the refund provision entirely, so no landowner would be entitled to a refund, no matter how many parcels on which they pay the base fee. As always, DNR has a difficult time securing enough funds to provide the forest fire protection that is necessary to protect both public and private lands. Unfortunately, the public dissatisfaction at learning that they are no longer eligible for a refund will be vented at the county courthouse rather than at the Governor's office or at DNR.

Short Rotation Hardwoods

HB 1024, increasing the growing cycle for short-rotation hardwoods for tax purposes was passed out of House Natural Resources on Tuesday, January 30. The bill is now in Rules.

The Senate version of this bill, **SB 5108** is on its way to Rules, as well. The bill was heard last Friday in Senate Agriculture & International Trade, and was passed out of committee on Wednesday, January 31.

Compensating Taxation/Death Window

The assessors' request legislation to reestablish the two-year death window for surviving spouses for all lands classified under open space and timber has been introduced in the Senate as **SB 5228**. The sponsors of the bill are Senator Fraser and Senator Winsley.

This week, **HB 1450** has been introduced, which is virtually identical to the Senate bill, because of a constituent contact with Representative Rockefeller from the 23rd District. **HB 1450** is also co-sponsored by Representative Morris who is one of the Co-Chairs of the House Finance Committee. The bill is scheduled for a hearing in House Finance Committee on February 7 at 3:30 p.m. We have contacted Representative Rockefeller's office to indicate that we support his proposal, as well, and would be happy to testify before the House Finance Committee. Both bills would allow for the sale, transfer or removal of the lands that have continuously been in the program since 12/31/1992 from these programs, by the surviving owner for a two-year period without being subject to the compensating tax. **HB 1450** has a retroactive provision.

Please contact Brenda Bamford at 360-586-4219 Ext. 124 or bbamford@wacounties.org if you have experience with this type of situation in your county, or would like to testify in favor of the bill.

Timber Tax Rewrite

The Timber Tax Rewrite measure has been introduced in the Senate as **SB 5702**, with the prime sponsor being Senator Sid Snyder. It was co-sponsored by Senators Winsley, Spanel and Rossi. The measure will be referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee where its fate is uncertain. We continue to receive requests from various timberland owners for modifications to the legislation and we still have no firm commitment on what support we might expect when the bill comes up for consideration. Although we have worked diligently in the last two years to deal with landowners concerns, it appears that it is not going to be possible to satisfy all. Even though there are numerous provisions in the bill that are advantageous to landowners, we expect that there will still be opposition expressed when the bill is brought up for consideration.

Treasurers' Cleanup Bill

The County Treasurers' bill to make technical corrections in statute has been introduced in the Senate as **SB 5638**, and has been assigned to the Senate State and Local Government Committee. Those Treasurers with members on the Committee should contact them and ask them to support the bill when it comes up for hearing.

LABOR & PENSION POLICY

LEOFF 1 Medical And Long- Term Care Costs (HB 1072, SB 5191)

The Joint Committee on Pension Policy (JCPP), with the support of counties and cities, has recommended legislation that will provide some relief to local governments for LEOFF 1 members, using part of the LEOFF 1 pension surplus. There is currently over a \$1 billion surplus in the fund. Passage of **HB 1072** and **SB 5191** would:

- Create a LEOFF 1 retiree medical benefits account, to partially reimburse employers for LEOFF 1 medical costs and insurance premiums.
- Create a local government long-term care risk pool, to be funded by local government premiums and potentially surplus pension funds.

The legislature could then authorize transfers from the pension fund to the medical account/risk pool on an annual basis.

Your legislators need to hear from you. Remind them about your significant financial obligations for LEOFF 1 medical and long-term care costs. A recent actuarial study shows that local governments face an unfounded obligation of \$800 million over the lifetime of all LEOFF 1 members. Urge them to support this legislation, as well as the annual appropriations from the LEOFF 1 pension surplus to the medical benefits account.

TRANSPORTATION

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation (BRCT) Package on the Web

This package is on a fast track. SB 5740 thru SB 5766 and HB 1664 thru HB 1687 and HB 1689 thru HB 1691 make of the package of the BRCT bills that the legislature will be addressing in a rapid fashion.

The following public hearings are scheduled in the House Transportation Committee for next week on the BRCT package:

Monday, Feb. 5 – 3:30 pm

HB 1677 – Modifying prevailing wage survey techniques

HB 1678- Right of way revolving fund for local government

HB 1679- Tracking environmental mitigation costs

Wednesday, Feb. 7 – 3:30 pm

HB 1685- Permit streamlining

HB 1689- Linking transportation funding to efficiencies

HB 1691- Linking maintenance and preservation funds to best practices

In the Senate, the BRCT package has yet to be addressed.

Last week the House Transportation Committee started hearing bills related to the Blue Ribbon on Transportation (BRCT) recommendation. HB 1680 (Extending design-build process), HB 1664 (adjusting responsibilities of the transportation Commission and HB 1665 (Reviewing transportation administration practices) were all heard this week.

Last week the Senate Transportation Committee convened a round-table discussion on local government transportation efficiencies and other success stories. After three hours of discussion, Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, reported how pleased she was to hear how local governments are managing to do more by partnering with other governmental agencies.

ADMINISTRATIVE & GOVERNANCE

Hearing Set To Limit Executive Sessions (HB 1384)

A hearing will be held on HB 1384 on Monday, Feb 5 at 10:00 a.m. in front of the House State Government Committee. The bill will further restrict executive sessions by defining what is potential litigation and if that standard is met then minutes must be kept of the executive session. The WSAC Legislative Steering Committee unanimously voted to oppose this bill. Please let your House members know of your concerns. The bill will encourage further lawsuits and increase costs for counties by requiring minutes be taken. More importantly, if passed into law, this bill will destroy the attorney-client privilege you now have with your attorney. The public will ultimately be at risk by adoption of the bill.

SB 5559 Limits Audit Costs

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen has prime sponsored SB 5559 which will require the State Auditor to limit the cost of an audit to the amount charged the previous year plus the state growth factor. This was in direct response to many special purpose districts complaining of audit costs increasing over 100% in a single year. With passage of voter tax cutting initiatives local governments simply have fewer resources to pay for state mandates.

The bill provides that the state auditor shall notify the local government at least four months in advance of the audit of the estimate of cost. If the cost exceeds the cost of the previous audit by a percentage that exceeds the fiscal growth factor the entity may contract with a private contractor to provide the audit.

This bill would appear to benefit counties by providing a predictable audit cost that can be budgeted each year.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

Status of bills of interest to county officials may be found at <http://www.wacounties.org/waco/leg.pdf>.

Legislature - Daily Schedule

We have many county officials who listen to legislative hearings of interest on TVW. If you would like to see a complete list of which legislative committees are meeting on a particular day, and a list of bills that the committee will be hearing, visit the Washington State Legislature's homepage (accessible through the WACO website or at www.leg.wa.gov). Scroll down the page to the end where it says "Legislative Calendars" and click. The daily schedule is available here and previous schedules are archived so that you can listen to testimony on a bill you may have missed hearing the week before.

Bills to Watch

SB 5556, declares that an association that has a majority of officers who are public officials or gets more than 25% of its income paid with public funds, can't use facilities for or against a ballot proposition, a political committee, or candidate. The Senate State and Local Government will hear SB 5556 on February 5 at 1:30 p.m.

SB 5559, allowing local government audits by private contractors.

SB 5577, Civil service act of 2001.

ELECTIONS

The House Select Committee on Elections continued hearings this week on the blanket primary issue. On Friday, February 2, the public will have an opportunity to address this issue. Earlier in the week, this committee heard from the major political party chairs who continued their argument that their civil rights have been compromised. Legislators appear to feel very strongly about maintaining privacy for the voters and in the crafting of legislation ensuring that it not become public what party affiliation or ballot type a voter may choose. Next week in the committee, members will hear testimony on **HB 1551**, which preserves the blanket primary. This bill was sponsored by Representatives Val Ogden and Dave Schmidt. Two hearings are scheduled on **HB 1551** - 2/6 at 8:00 am and on 2/7 at 10:00 am. Both hearings are scheduled in House Hearing Room E.

Other election bills that are scheduled for hearings are **HB 1414**, establishing a statewide database for voter registration and a number of bills on revising the initiative process. Those bills will be heard on 2/9 at 8:00 am in HHR C in the State Government Committee. In the Senate State and Local Government Committee **SB 5579**, whose title is "protecting the integrity of elections" will be heard in SHR 3 on 2/8 at 3:30 pm. This bill is a Secretary of State request bill

DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

Bills to Watch

HB 1611, dental identification records, removes the requirement that the Washington State Patrol erase all dental records of a missing person if he/she has been found. The Forensic Investigations Council has endorsed this proposal since there has been occasion when a person has been reported missing more than once.

HB 1613, dental records, requires that a coroner or medical examiner who is unable to identify a deceased person forwards dental examination records to the WSP Dental ID Section within 30 days. The measure has been approved by FIC and WACME.

NEWS from MRSC

MRSC Launches Digital Government Strategic Planning Effort

By June 2001, Municipal Research & Services will have completed a *Digital Government Strategic Plan*. Our goal is to help local governments in Washington implement digital government applications by sharing expertise, staffing, hardware, software, and bandwidth. We anticipate that service areas will include master contracts, application hosting, application development, education, and technical support. Possible applications include online payments, service requests, licensing, permitting, bid solicitation and small works rosters.

We hope to fund the services through a combination of user fees, foundation funding and corporate sponsorship. By pooling resources, medium and smaller sized jurisdictions will be able to provide digital government services that might not otherwise be affordable.

Benefits of digital government services include an increase in productivity, more cost-effective services, coordination in service delivery between levels of government, and greater access to government information. Imagine the convenience to residents and businesses of obtaining licenses and permits or reserving parks & recreation facilities through their home or office computers without having to drive to county offices and wait in line. Imagine the convenience to county staff of the information on the forms going directly into office systems and databases.

To advise us on our plan, MRSC has formed a Task Force consisting of 13 representatives from cities, counties, the state and a charitable foundation. In addition to the Task Force members, we are forming a "reader's group" of an additional 20-30 people to review elements of the plan. If you are interested in reviewing and commenting on the plan, please contact Fred Ward at 206-625-1300 or fward@mrsc.org.

New MRSC Web Site for Local Government Business Licensing Information

MRSC has created a local government business Web site called the Business E-government Information Network, <http://beginwa.org>. This site will make it easier for companies that conduct business in multiple localities to obtain license application forms. Initially, businesses will be able to print the forms and mail them to the jurisdictions with their payment. Later plans include setting up online forms for businesses to submit and pay for the applications via the Internet. Ultimately, the site will serve as a portal to a broad range of local government business services and information statewide. It currently includes more than 90 city business license application forms, along with information about licensing requirements and regulations.

If your county has forms to add to this site please E-mail to wwauchope@mrsc.org or mail to Wendy Wauchope, Municipal Research & Service, 1200 5th Avenue, Ste. 1300, Seattle, WA 98101-1159.

COMING EVENTS

2001 Conferences

February

22-23 Washington State Association of County Auditors' Recording Conference, Enzian Inn, Leavenworth.

March

- 2-6 National Association of Counties' (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.
 13-15 Wa State Association of Sheriffs' and Oregon State Association of Sheriffs' Annual Joint Meeting, Seaside, Oregon.

April

- 22-28 National County Government Week.
 25-27 Wa Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Annual Spring Training Program, WestCoast Gateway, Yakima.
 26-28 Wa State Assn of County Clerks' and Superior Court Administrators' Joint Conference, Lakeway Inn, Bellingham.

May

- 7-9 Washington State Association of County Auditors' Elections Conference, Yakima.
 21-24 Washington State Association of Sheriffs' and Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Spring Meeting, Sheraton Hotel, Tacoma.
 23-26 National Assn of Counties' Annual Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference, Hilton Waikoloa Village, Hilo, Hawaii.

June

- 3-6 Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
 10-14 International Association of Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada.
 11-13 Washington State Association of County Assessors' Annual June Conference, Olympia.
 15-21 International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers' Annual Conference, Billings, Montana.
 18-22 Washington State Association of County Treasurers' Annual Conference, Red Lion Hotel, Wenatchee.
 19-20 Washington Association of Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Annual Spring Training, Moses Lake.
 19-22 Association of Washington Cities' (AWC) Annual Conference, Bellevue.
 20-22 Washington State Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Summer Training Program, Campbell's Lodge, Chelan.
 23-27 National Sheriffs' Association Annual Conference, Marriott Marina, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
 24-29 Washington State Association of County Clerks' Annual Conference, Howard Johnson Hotel, Everett.
 27-30 Washington State Association of Counties' (WSAC) Summer Conference, WestCoast Gateway, Yakima.

July

- 13-17 National Association of Counties' (NACo) Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
 22-26 National District Attorneys' Assn (NDAA) Annual Summer Conference, The Westin Copley Place, Boston Massachusetts.

August

- 27-30 Washington State Association of County Assessors' Annual Conference, Enzian Inn, Leavenworth.

September

- 9-12 International Association of Assessing Officers' (IAAO) Annual Conference, Miami, Florida.
 19-21 Washington Finance Officers' Association (WFOA) Annual Conference, Wenatchee.

October

- 1-5 Washington Assn of County Officials' Annual Conference, Port Ludlow Resort and Conference Center, Port Ludlow.

November

- 12-15 Washington Association of Sheriffs' and Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Annual Fall Conference, Doubletree, Pasco.
 14-16 Washington State Assn of Counties' (WSAC) Annual Legislative Conference, Silverdale Hotel on the Bay, Silverdale.

December

- 13-14 Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Annual Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza, Seattle.

COURTHOUSE RAMBLINGS

Potts To Head Farmworker Housing Program

Jim Potts has been appointed to a new position in WSAC, Farmworker Housing Coordinator. The Office of Community Development has entered into a contract with WSAC to provide for an outreach program to help the state provide housing for farmworkers. The contract runs through the end of 2001 and is funded by an appropriation from the Legislature.

Potts will work with local elected and community leaders in providing a community based solution to provide housing in those farm communities that use seasonal workers. Over the past few years there have been several attempts to pass legislation that would provide state assistance in providing housing. WSAC has supported those efforts.

Potts currently has contracts with 12 counties to provide lobbying. He will retain the services of Mike Shaw, formerly a policy director with WSAC, to assist him with his counties during this session of the Legislature. Welcome aboard, Jim.

Commissioner Stefaniw Returns To Work Following Surgery

Last month Chelan County Commissioner Esther Stefaniw returned to work after undergoing brain surgery. The surgery was very successful and Esther missed only two weeks of work before she jumped back into the fray.

“Skeletons” for Scholarships

Dear Valentine: Show me your love by getting me the new travel mug from the Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners! It is only \$10.00 and has those terrific dancing skeletons. A WACME travel mug will warm my heart and my coffee! (Besides, the profits will go the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund to send children of county employees off to school.)

Councilmember Fimia Won't Run For Reelection

King County Councilmember Maggie Fimia announced this week that she will not seek reelection this year. King County's charter provides for election of councilmembers in uneven years. Fimia was co-chair of the WSAC Legislative Steering Committee during the 1997 Legislative session.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senior Appraiser, Office of the Assessor, Thurston County. Salary: \$2,694 - \$3,681. Closing Date: February 16, 2001. Appraises residential properties to establish fair market value using methods prescribed by the appraisal profession. Emphasis on mass appraisal methods, data requirements and statistical analysis, assessment ratio studies, modeling of the three approaches to value. Senior Appraiser may appraise light commercial properties in addition to residential properties. Prepares maps with appraisal information. Researches and analyzes sales. Inspects and classifies properties according to property characteristics. Defines market area boundaries for computer assisted Mass Appraisal. Minimum Qualifications: High School Diploma or GED plus courses in business, accounting, finance, and Washington State sponsored or professionally approved courses in residential or commercial property appraisal. Minimum of three years experience in appraising property for equitable valuation. Valid Washington State Driver's License and State Real Property Appraiser Accreditation. For questions regarding job duties, contact Renee Gilbert, Administrative Assistant, (360)786-5412.

Chief Deputy Treasurer, Treasurer's Office, Benton County. Salary range: \$4,085 - \$5,122 per month, plus benefits. Supervises Manager of Public Services and Manager of Treasury Operations. Oversees staff of twelve. Plans, directs, and oversees tax collections, cash management, investments, accounting, and the financial computer system for the County as well as all junior taxing districts within the county. Directs and manages staff in daily operations to provide citizens of the County and various governmental entities with treasury and tax collection services. Provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the County Treasurer. The Chief Deputy has the full responsibility and authority to serve in the absence of the Treasurer. Minimum Qualifications: Six years of progressively responsible experience, preferably in governmental finance, investment portfolio management, accounting or auditing, with at least two years of management experience. Bachelor's Degree in finance, business administration, or other closely related field required. Desired qualifications include CPA or graduate level course work in accounting and extensive experience using Excel and Access. A demonstrated combination of experience and education, that is equivalent in the Treasurer's opinion, may be substituted in lieu of above prerequisites. For application, contact the Treasurer's Office, (509) 736-3087 or (509) 786-2255. Applications must be received in the Treasurer's Office, 620 Market St., Prosser, WA 99350 or mail to PO Box 630, Prosser, WA 99350. Visit the website at www.co.benton.wa.us.

Long Range Planning Supervisor, Planning Department, Yakima County. Annual Salary Range: \$42,291 - \$61,541. The Yakima County Planning Department is looking for a motivated professional to lead the Long Range Planning Section in highly complex urban and rural issues. The successful candidate will be required to coordinate comprehensive land use planning under the State Growth Management Act in addition to administrative and supervisory tasks. Requires equivalent to a Bachelors' Degree in Planning or a related field and five years' progressively responsible planning experience, including one year of supervisory experience. Significant long-range planning experience is required; additional current and/or environmental planning experience is preferred. WA land use and environmental law and ARC/INFO or ARC/VIEW experience is desirable. Check out our website www.pan.co.yakima.wa.us or www.visit Yakima.com for more information on the County and the Yakima Valley. Applications will be accepted until Friday, March 30, 2001. Contact: Yakima County Human Resources Department, 128 North 2nd Street, Room 412 Courthouse, Yakima, WA 98901, (509) 574-2220 or E-Mail human.resources@co.yakima.wa.us.

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Franklin County. Salary: \$40,429 - \$55,731, actual salary will depend on experience and qualifications. Minimum qualifications: member of Washington State Bar in good standing, Bilingual skills would be helpful, valid driver's license. Desired qualifications: Two years experience. Assignment: District Court responsibilities. Application procedure: Submit cover letter, resume, writing sample and references to Steve M. Lowe, Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney, PO Box 1160, Pasco, WA 99301-1160. Candidates selected for personal interviews will be contacted by telephone. For more information contact Jennifer Peterson, Office Administrator, (509) 545-03543. Open until filled. Franklin County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.