

Transportation and Public Works bill round-up

Week #5

It has been a rather quiet session when it comes to bill introductions. Legislative leadership asked members to limit the number of bills introduced this year due to the virtual nature of session – it seems many have listened. But, there are always some that stick out, and this session is no exception. A few of the bills I am following on behalf of WSACE include:

Bills to support:

[HB 1023](#): Rep. Mike Steele (R-Chelan): Concerning predesign requirements and thresholds.

HB 1023 would increase the threshold for construction projects requiring predesign from \$5 million to \$10 million, which establishes the same threshold for all capital project types. It also allows OFM the authority to waive some or all predesign requirements on capital projects exceeding the \$10 million threshold. This bill is scheduled for executive action in the Capital Budget Committee on February 9.

[HB 1030](#), Rep Tom Dent (R-Moses Lake): Relating to a community aviation revitalization loan program.

HB 1030 tasks WSDOT with forming a community aviation revitalization board, consisting of county representation, to make direct loans to airport sponsors of public use airports in the state for the purpose of airport improvements. This bill was voted out of committee unanimously on February 2 and is headed to the Rules Committee.

[HB 1137](#), Rep. Bob McCaslin (R-Spokane Valley): Elevating road maintenance and preservation in transportation planning.

HB 1137 reorders the state's six transportation policy goals to prioritize health and safety and preservation and maintenance as the state's foremost priorities when it comes to transportation investments. The other four goals include economic vitality, mobility, environment, and stewardship. HB 1137 had a public hearing in the Transportation Committee on January 25 and is currently awaiting executive action.

[HB 1268](#), Rep. Sharon Shewmake (D-Bellingham): Clarifying the authority of local gov's to administer national flood insurance program regulation requirements in the context of fish habitat enhancement projects authorized pursuant to RCW 77.55.181.

HB 1268 is a bill brought forward by the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) clarifying that local governments may charge fees or impose requirements for certain types of fish habitat enhancement projects in order to administer National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulation requirements. FEMA recently raised concerns that the existing HPA Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (or FHEP) process, as defined in RCW 77.55.181(4), could be read to prevent local governments from carrying out these duties. As a result of this, as well as other questions they have about how their policies are being implemented, FEMA has expressed concern about Washington's good standing in the program. This bill is set to clarify and clear-up any issues.

Concerns:

[HB 1099](#), Rep Davina Duerr (D- Bothell): Improving the state’s climate response through updates to the state’s comprehensive planning framework.

HB 1099 adds a goal of climate change mitigation to the listed goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA). It does so by adding “climate change” and “resiliency” to the list of elements that must be included within the comprehensive plans that certain counties and cities adopt under GMA. In addition, it would require the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in certain counties and cities.

The above is just a small summary of the large changes HB 1099 makes to the GMA and the impact it will have on land use and transportation planning. One of our counties biggest concerns will be the cost of adopting these new rules and standards.

WSAC Policy Director, Paul Jewell, who covers Land Use and Environmental issues, is the lead on this legislation and has been working closely with stakeholders to address the concerns we have with the legislation. For updates on this bill keep an eye out for WSAC’s weekly [Bulletin here](#)

[HB 1308](#), Rep. Marcus Ricelli (D-Spokane): Expanding apprenticeship utilization requirements.

HB 1308 would require county public works projects over \$1 million to include specifications that no less than 15% of the labor hours be performed by apprentices. It would also require contracts that cost \$200,000 or more for subcontractors to include specifications that no less than 15% of the labor hours be performed by apprentices.

Counties have concerns with this legislation, especially as it relates to increased costs that could be incurred, as well as the availability of labor. I testified with these concerns on February 2 in the House Capital Budget Committee.

[HB 1440](#), Rep. Matt Boehnka (R-Kennewick): Bringing innovation and investment to Washington’s economy by streamlining the requirements for deployment of small wireless facilities.

HB 1440 would allow wireless providers to utilize local government rights-of-way for the deployment of small wireless facilities and associated poles.

This is another bill that I am not the active WSAC lead on but will continue to monitor closely.