

Fiscal cutoff looms

February 15, 2021

As we enter week six there is only one week left until the first fiscal cutoff. After Monday, February 22, bills are considered “dead” if they have not received executive action in a fiscal committee (transportation, capital budget, appropriations). That means this is a busy week for public hearings and executive session in the transportation and capital budget worlds.

Some of the bills of interest to counties include:

[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. HB 1030 is scheduled for public hearing in the House Capital Budget Committee on Tuesday, February 16 at 8am.

[HB 1091](#), Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon (D-West Seattle): Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the carbon intensity of transportation fuel.

Known as the “low carbon fuel standards or “LCSF” bill, this would require the Department of Ecology to adopt rules establishing a clean fuels program to limit the aggregate, overall greenhouse gas emissions per unit of transportation fuel. While WSACE has not taken a position on this legislation, we are watching it closely. It is scheduled for public hearing in House Transportation on Tuesday, February 16, at 1:30pm.

[HB 1502](#), Rep. Sharon Wylie (D-Vancouver): Concerning the procurement and design of electric ferries by counties.

HB 1502 would allow any county to use “best-value” bidding for the procurement and design of electric ferries. This bill comes from Skagit County and their efforts to secure an electric ferry for the Guemes Island run. HB 1502 is scheduled for public hearing in House Transportation on Tuesday, February 16, at 1:30pm. WSACE will be supportive of this legislation.

[SB 5032](#), Sen. Bob Hasegawa (D-Seattle): Concerning the reauthorization and improvements to alternative public works contracting procedures.

SB 5032 would extend the use of alternative public works contracting procedures until July 1, 2031. This is the top priority of the Capital Projects Advisory Review Board (CPARB). It is scheduled for public hearing in the House Capital Budget Committee on Tuesday, February 16, at 8am. We are supportive of this legislation.

[SB 5444](#), Sen. Rebecca Saldaña (D-Seattle): Implementing a per mile charge on electric and hybrid vehicles.

SB 5444 would establish a per mile fee (i.e. a road usage charge or vehicle miles traveled fee) on certain electric and hybrid vehicles, effective July 1, 2026. It would direct revenues from this new fee into the

multimodal account. The bill would also repeal the \$150 electric vehicle fee, and the \$75 transportation electrification fee that same year.

WSACE has not taken a position on a road usage charge but has concerns with the funding component of the bill. Currently the County Road Administration Board and the Transportation Improvement Board receive a small portion of the electric vehicle fee. With its repeal, but no replacement, counties will lose a revenue source.

SB 5444 is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee on Thursday, February 18, at 1:30pm.

Other happenings

In addition to a busy public hearing schedule, the House Transportation Committee will be holding a work session on Thursday, February 18, 1:30-3:30pm, to discuss “current and emerging transportation needs.” Counties have been invited to participate on a panel with cities and ports. If you are interested in tuning in check out TVW.org