



Week 6 Report
02.22.25

The sixth week of the legislative session brought about a shift in the dynamics on the capitol campus with the approach of the first major deadline: “the policy committee cutoff” on Friday, February 21st. This week policy committees had packed agendas with long executive sessions to advance bills before Friday’s deadline. Meanwhile, in fiscal committees, long lists of bills were added to the hearing schedule in preparation for action before the fiscal committee deadline next Friday.

The capitol campus continues to hum with external advocacy efforts, as hundreds of students, parents, and educators gathered on Monday’s Presidents’ Day holiday to push for increased state funding for public schools. Their collective ask centers on three bills that propose an additional \$2 billion in the next budget to support special education, student transportation, and overall school operations.

Alongside those education advocates, the Washington Potato Commission hosted its annual Potato Day at the capitol. Lawmakers, staff, and visitors were treated to baked potatoes loaded with fixings, showcasing the importance of Washington’s potato industry and its contributions to the state’s economy. Events like these serve as a reminder of the diverse industries and communities engaging in the legislative process to advocate for their priorities. The sharing of free food is a welcome and appreciated bonus.

Meanwhile, an interesting [debate](#) has emerged regarding the potential redesign of the state flag. The current flag, featuring the state seal on a green background, has remained unchanged since its adoption in 1923. Proponents of the effort argue that redesigning the flag could better reflect Washington’s identity, aligning with modern flag design principles that emphasize simplicity and symbolism. However, critics believe the existing flag is an important historic emblem and should be preserved.

Your WPPA staff closely monitored legislative developments while also taking part in a blood drive sponsored by the House of Representatives. Aware of the on-going need for blood

AT A GLANCE

Length: 105 days; Regular session began on January 13, 2025

For up-to-date legislative information, visit: leg.wa.gov

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SESSION CUTOFF DATES

- Feb. 21, 2025: House of Origin Policy Cutoff
- Feb. 28, 2025: House of Origin Fiscal Cutoff
- March 12, 2025: House of Origin Floor Cutoff
- March 24, 2025: Opposite House Policy Cutoff
- March 31, 2025: Opposite House Fiscal Cutoff
- April 9, 2025: Opposite House Floor Cutoff
- April 27, 2025: Last Day of Session

For more information about cutoff dates, visit: leg.wa.gov

donations, we were grateful to join other members of the legislative community to support this lifesaving cause. Legislative session days are often hectic, but it was truly uplifting to witness so many people taking the time to give back in such a simple, but meaningful way.

The focus now shifts to fiscal committees, which have until February 28th to advance bills that impact to the state budget. Next week will be dominated by extended hearings in the Transportation, Ways and Means, Finance, and Appropriations Committees. The field of active bills continue to narrow after next week, but as some bills die we expect additional new tax and revenue proposals to be introduced as budget discussions ramp up. The next revenue forecast from the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council will be released on March 18th and the House and Senate will release budget proposals shortly thereafter.

More information to come, please read our full report below.

Action Alert - Sign in on the following bill

NOTE: WPPA staff are working hard on the legislative proposals highlighted in this section, and we would love your support! If you're comfortable signing in "pro" or "con" to show your port's position, we would be grateful! If you're interested in signing in, but unsure of the process, please reach out to WPPA staff. We will use this area of the report to briefly spotlight bills that would benefit from your engagement.

Sign in PRO - Support: [SB 5649](#), Supply Chain Competitiveness Infrastructure Program - public hearing February 25th in the Senate Transportation Committee

WPPA Weekly Bill Tracking Update

Aviation

SEA Environmental Justice and Community Engagement:

[SB 5652/HB 1948](#), sponsored by Sen. Orwall (D-33rd LD, Des Moines) and Rep. Santos (D-37th LD, Seattle) would require the Port of Seattle to develop new and additional environmental justice implementation plans, expand their engagement with communities around SEA Airport, and assess the environmental and health impacts of any "significant port action" costing more than \$8 million. The bill mandates collaboration with public health experts and community members to mitigate adverse effects of air and noise pollution and creates new authority for academic entities and public health agencies to influence projects. The Senate version received a public hearing in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on February 18th. WPPA testified against the bill and expressed concerns about what it could mean for SEA's ability to accommodate demand for commercial aviation service. We were joined in our opposition by the Ports of Seattle and Pasco, airline industry representatives, and business advocates. An executive session has not yet been scheduled on SB 5652, and its House companion has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing.

Broadband

Digital Equity:

[HB 1503](#), sponsored by Rep. Gregerson (D-33rd LD, SeaTac), would transition some of the duties of the Statewide Broadband Office to the Office of Equity. The goal of the proposal, according

to proponents, is to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Digital Equity Plan which seeks to provide greater access to broadband to hard-to-reach and low-income communities. WPPA testified with concerns about the changes the bill makes to the state's broadband speed goals. In certain circumstances, the speed goals have been reduced to align with federal funding. WPPA supports goals which are aspirational and recognizes the need for increasingly resilient internet services in the future. WPPA worked with the bill sponsor on an amendment retaining the existing speed goals and establishing a process to update speed goals in 2027. The bill was passed out of the House Technology, Economic Development & Veterans Committee on February 18th and has not yet been scheduled for a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee.

Broadband Infrastructure Repair & Replacement:

[HB 1441/SB 5188](#), sponsored by Rep. Ryu (D-32nd LD, Shoreline) and Sen. Wellman (D-41st LD, Mercer Island), would allow the public works board to fund repair projects for broadband infrastructure by either grants or loans. The bills have minor differences in language, but both would accomplish similar goals. WPPA will testify in support of SB 5188 at the public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 24th. HB 1441 has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing.

Economic Development

Support for Associate Development Organizations:

[HB 1406/SB 5677](#), sponsored by Rep. Barnard (R-8th LD, Pasco) and Sen. Cortes (D-18th LD, Battle Ground), increases allocations and modifies reporting requirements for associate development organizations (ADOs). This is a legislative priority for WPPA and our economic development partners at the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA). The House bill is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 22nd. The Senate bill was passed out of the Senate Business, Financial Services & Trade Committee on February 19th and is in the Rules Committee. WPPA will sign in pro at the hearing on this bill on the 22nd.

Non-resident Vessel Permit Length Requirements:

[SB 5281](#), sponsored by Sen. Chapman (D-24th LD, Port Angeles), would increase the allowable non-resident vessel length from 200 feet in length to 300 feet in length. This legislation aims to encourage more boats to extend stays in Washington's waters. This bill supports services including deep maintenance and retrofitting in Washington's boatyards and provisioning of goods onboard the vessels. WPPA testified in support alongside our industry partners at the public hearing on this bill. The bill passed the Senate unanimously on February 19th.

Energy

Local Energy Resilience:

[SB 5445](#), sponsored by Sen. Boehnke (R-8th LD, Kennewick), seeks to promote utility investments in local energy resilience projects. The bill allows utilities to make investments in energy resilience by establishing an alternate compliance pathway for Renewable Energy Credits (REC) under the Energy Independence Act (EIA) for qualifying local energy resilience projects. A [substitute bill](#) was passed by the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology on February 21st.

The substitute narrows the definition of a local energy resilience projects to only those involving accelerated conservation or demand response. WPPA remains neutral on this bill but supports the improvements made in the substitute amendment to address energy resiliency challenges.

Electric Transmission System Improvements; The Transmission Office:

[SB 5466/ HB 1673](#) sponsored by Sen. Shewmake (D-42nd LD, Bellingham) and Rep. Ramel (D-40th LD, Bellingham), established an Electric Transmission Office at the Department of Commerce. The office would be a statewide resource for local governments permitted to exercise the right of eminent domain. The bill also included a SEPA categorical exemption for upgrading and rebuilding transmission lines. A substitute bill was passed out of the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on February 18th. The substitute changes portions of the bill, including establishing an Electric Transmission Authority tasked with supporting the expansion of and upgrades to the transmission system. The SEPA categorical exemption is maintained but now includes upgrades with grid-enhancing technologies. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on February 24th. The House companion substitute version was passed out of the House Energy and Environment Committee on February 18th. WPPA is supportive of the substitute bills and continues to support additional resources for addressing the state's energy supply challenges.

Clean Energy Development Office:

[HB 1328/ SB 5359](#), sponsored by Rep. Doglio (D-22nd LD, Olympia) and Sen. Shewmake (D-42nd LD, Bellingham), came at the request of the Department of Commerce. This bill would create the Clean Energy Development Office within Commerce and tasks the office with providing resources to local governments to aid in the goal of accelerating the development of clean energy projects and increasing transmission capacity. There has been no action on the House version since its public hearing on January 27th in the House Environment & Energy Committee. A Senate substitute version passed out of the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on February 18th. The substitute focuses the office on clean energy development (not transmission) by creating a workgroup to look at siting and permitting of large-scale battery storage and supports local governments with clean energy development under the Growth Management Act. WPPA is now neutral on the bill as it is unclear if there is a meaningful nexus to ports.

Increasing Transmission Capacity:

[HB 1819](#), sponsored by Rep. Barnard (R-8th LD, Pasco), is a bipartisan effort to require electric utilities in Washington to develop integrated resource plans (IRPs) that assess demand forecasts, conservation measures, resource options, and transmission needs. It mandates a 20-year transmission capacity forecast, encourages optimizing existing infrastructure, and promotes integrating renewable energy through advanced technologies. It includes a SEPA categorical exemption for upgrading or rebuilding existing transmission lines with advanced conductors. A substitute bill was passed out of the House Environment & Energy Committee on February 18th. The sub maintains the SEPA categorical exemption and expands it to include grid-enhancing technologies and prohibits it from applying to underwater lines. And it modifies requirements of the IRP. WPPA continues to support this bill which could help identify solutions to the energy transmission challenges and provide a better understanding of future energy capacity in the state.

County Public Utility Tax:

[HB 1702](#), sponsored by Rep. Wylie (D-49th LD, Vancouver), would allow counties to impose an excise tax of up to 3 percent on utility providers which includes electric power, gas, telephone, water, sewer, solid waste, cable service. Counties may allow an exemption for manufacturing, aircraft repair, industrial parks, industrial facilities, farm businesses, and data centers. WPPA has concerns about this bill and its application and impact on port districts who provide these utility services, oftentimes some of our smallest port districts. Additionally, we have concerns about the possible impact to many of our port tenants. WPPA [testified](#) in opposition to this bill at the public hearing in the House Finance Committee on February 21st.

Thermal Energy:

[SHB 1514](#), sponsored by Rep. Ramel (D-40th LD, Bellingham), would promote the development of thermal energy networks (TENs) by bringing the industry under the regulatory control of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC). It would also require electrical utilities to put thermal energy into their planning process and direct the Department of Commerce to provide grant funding for the design, planning, and permitting of thermal energy networks. The substitute bill makes minor changes including an opt-in provision and adds a definition for thermal energy. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 22nd. WPPA supports this bill which encourages the deployment of low carbon energy options in Washington.

Environment And Natural Resources

New Environmental Justice SEPA Element:

[HB 1303/SB 5380](#), sponsored by Rep. Mena (D-29th LD, Tacoma) and Sen. Lovelett (D-40th LD, Anacortes), would integrate environmental justice (EJ) considerations into certain projects at the Department of Ecology by adding it as an element of the environment and a part of the SEPA checklist. The bill would require an EJ impact statement on projects defined as a “potentially impactful project” as a part of the SEPA environmental checklist process. The House version was amended to significantly narrow the bill and address some of the main concerns raised in testimony. However, we remain concerned by the [substitute](#) simply requiring Ecology to undertake rulemaking that may still impose unnecessary costs and delays, on projects. The bill received a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 19th and WPPA signed in con. The Senate companion, meanwhile, was heard in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on February 21st. There were no proposed amendments to the Senate version of the bill and WPPA [testified](#) in opposition.

Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISGP) Presumed Compliance:

[HB 1937/SB 5712](#), sponsored by Rep. Fey (D-27th LD, Tacoma) and Sen. Boehnke (R-8th LD, Kennewick), sought to establish a “safe harbor” provision of presumed compliance for entities covered under the state's ISGP. WPPA worked with the NWSA and the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma to get this bill introduced. The bill was scheduled for public hearings in the House Environment & Energy Committee on February 17th and the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on February 18th. However, the Department of Ecology raised significant concerns with the language in the bill at the last minute, and as a result it was removed from both hearing agendas. The bill is now considered dead this session. WPPA will engage in efforts around the 2025 ISGP as ports manage their expanded compliance requirements.

Water System Rates:

[HB 1906](#), sponsored by Rep. Tharinger (D-24th LD, Port Townsend) places more requirements around water utilities and the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) that would increase transparency, which we support. However, the bill would also require water utilities to submit water system plans every three years to the Health Department that would require all capital improvement projects necessary for the next 10 years. WPPA testified with concerns about small port districts that operate water systems having the capacity and resources to meet the new requirements at the public hearing on the bill on February 13th in the House Environment & Energy Committee. We have been engaging with other stakeholders and the bill author on an amendment that would allow for considerations, exemptions, or additional resources for utilities of a certain size. A [substitute](#) bill, which included some of the changes we requested, was passed out of the committee on February 20th.

Exempting Fuels Used for Agricultural Purposes from the Climate Commitment Act:

[HB 1912/SB 5630](#), sponsored by Rep. Dent (R-13th LD, Moses Lake) Sen. Dozier (R-11th LD, Waitsburg), would require the Department of Ecology to adopt rules and establish a remittance program for fuels that are used for agricultural purposes. WPPA supported exemptions for energy intense and trade exposed industries, like agriculture and maritime, when CCA passed in 2021, and we registered our support for the House bill at its initial public hearing consistent with that prior position. A [substitute](#) to HB 1912, with significant changes, was passed out of the House Environment & Energy Committee on February 20th. The bill no longer requires a remittance program but instead calls for additional data collection and tracking of exempt fuel sales through the fuel supply chain by Ecology. SB 5630 received a public hearing in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on February 19th, where we signed in support of the bill.

Bottom Culture Shellfish Farming:

[SB 5322/HB 1309](#), sponsored by Sen. Chapman (D-24th LD, Port Angeles) and Rep. McEntire (R-19th LD, Cathlamet), would direct the Washington State Department of Agriculture to establish an integrated pest management research program to address the impacts of burrowing shrimp on bottom culture shellfish farming. A [substitute](#) bill passed out of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee on February 20th. It has now been referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. Changes to the original bill are minimal but it eliminates funding for the program from the Model Toxics Control Account. The House version received a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 19th. WPPA is supporting this legislation given that we have many port members that work closely with their local shellfish industries.

Governance

Oath of Office for Local Elected Officials:

[HB 1573](#), sponsored by Rep. Rep. Parshley (D-22nd LD, Olympia), would provide additional flexibility for local elected officials, including port commissioners, to take their oath of office following their election. It would allow the newly-elected officials to take their oath as soon as the election was certified instead of the current requirement of ten days prior to the beginning of their term or at the last meeting of the governing body prior to the them assuming office. The current statute creates timing and logistical challenges as port commissions and other local

governments attempt to complete their end of year business around the holidays. This week, the bill was pulled from the House Rules Committee and is now on the House floor calendar, where it could be scheduled for a vote at any time. WPPA supports this bill.

Port Commissioner Elections:

[SB 5370](#), sponsored by Sen. Harris (R-17th LD, Camas) and cosponsored by Sen. Chapman (D-24th LD, Port Angeles) and Sen. Lovelett (D-40th LD, Anacortes), would amend [Title 53 RCW](#) to allow voters to extend port commissioner terms from four to six years in certain circumstances. This legislation was introduced at WPPA's request, and responds to concerns raised by ports with three-member commissions serving four-year terms. This week, the bill was pulled from the Senate Rules Committee and is now on the Senate floor calendar. We understand that it is expected to run in the Senate on Tuesday and will work with the bill sponsor and the committee chair to support them when the bill is up for a vote.

Labor

Artificial Intelligence Bargaining:

[HB 1622/SB 5422](#), sponsored by Rep. Parshley (D-22nd LD, Olympia) and Sen. Bateman (D-22nd LD, Olympia) would require public-sector employers, including ports, to bargain with their union represented employees over the decision to adopt or modify the use of artificial intelligence (AI). The House version was passed out of the House Labor & Workplace Standards Committee on February 18th. The Senate version received a public hearing in the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee on February 17th and was passed out of the committee on February 21st. At the public hearings, WPPA testified with concerns about how widespread AI is in modern tools and the potential for the bargaining requirement to significantly slow innovation and efficiency at our ports. The Senate version was amended to limit the bargaining requirement to when the adoption or modification of AI technology affects employees' wages or performance evaluations, rather than wages, hours, or terms and conditions of employment as stated in the original bill.

Technology Use by Employers:

[HB 1672](#), sponsored by Rep. Kloba (D-1st LD, Kirkland), would add regulations to employers' use of technology in the workplace by prohibiting practices such as requiring employees to install monitoring applications on personal devices and using facial recognition technology. The bill also mandates that employers provide advance notice to employees regarding any electronic monitoring such as keystroke logging or other productivity tracking programs and obtain consent before collecting biometric data. The bill was passed out of the House Labor & Workplace Committee on February 19th. It has been amended to only apply to private-sector employers. WPPA remains neutral on the bill and will continue to monitor it as it moves forward.

Land Use

No bills included in this report

Marina

Marine Mammal Protection Act:

[HJM 4004](#), sponsored by Rep. Chase (R-4th LD, Liberty Lake), would petition the U.S. Congress to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act to grant states and tribes increased flexibility in managing pinniped (seals, sea-lions) populations, including the use of lethal removal. The intent is to protect endangered salmon stocks across all marine shorelines and the Puget Sound. Several of our port members have raised concerns about pinnipeds causing property damage at their marina facilities and docks and at the limited options for dealing with them. The joint memorial received a public hearing and was subsequently passed out of House Agricultural & Natural Resources Committee on February 21st. WPPA supports this joint memorial and signed in pro.

Public Works

Responsible Bidding for Public Works:

[HB 1549/SB 5476](#), sponsored by Rep. Fosse (D-38nd LD, Everett) and Sen. Hasegawa (D-11th LD, Tukwila), would place additional requirements on contractors that bid on public works projects to produce an apprenticeship utilization plan. The House version is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Capital Budget Committee on February 25th. The bill now includes amendments that WPPA requested. The final concern that WPPA will speak to during the hearing in the House Capital Budget Committee on February 25th is around ensuring that sufficient training on apprenticeship utilization is made available to contractors and subcontractors. The Senate version has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate State Government, Tribal Affairs, and Elections Committee.

Prevailing Wage Paid When Work is Performed:

[SB 5061](#), sponsored by Sen. Conway (D-29th LD, Tacoma), would require public works contracts to provide for the payment of prevailing wages at the time the work is performed instead of when the contract is executed. WPPA testified in support of the underlying policy during the public hearing and will continue to advocate that contractors appropriately manage labor costs through the bid and award process and not require public owners to approve change orders well after the contract has been executed. WPPA met with the bill sponsor to discuss the importance of minimizing change orders to those impact project scope only. The bill was passed out of the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee on February 21st and is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 24th. WPPA is working with other public owners on amendment language that would minimize the administrative burden and keep the cost implications of implementing this legislation within the existing bid and award decision process.

Recreation & Tourism

Alcohol Service in Public Places:

[HB 1515](#), sponsored by Rep. Reed (D-36th LD, Seattle), would allow “cities, counties, and towns” to request approval from the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) to provide expanded outdoor alcohol service for liquor licensees at large events. Because some port districts have sought similar allowances from the LCB in the past - and because two ports have been selected as FIFA World Cup 2026 fan zone sites - WPPA testified in support and worked

with the bill sponsor, committee chair, and legislative supporters to include port districts in the list of local governments named. The bill was passed out of the House Consumer Protection & Business Committee on February 19th in amended form. WPPA participated in a strategy session to discuss how we can support the bill as it heads for the Appropriations Committee. We will be reaching out to individual ports for their help contacting Appropriations Committee members to keep the bill moving.

Tax & Revenue

Sales Tax Authority for Cities with Warehouses:

[SB 5518/](#)[HB 1532](#), sponsored by Sen. Kauffman (D-47th LD, Kent) and Rep. Stearns (D-47th LD, Auburn), would authorize the City of Kent to impose a local sales and use tax of up to 0.3%, credited against the state tax, to mitigate the fiscal impacts of sales tax sourcing laws. These laws dictate that sales tax revenue is allocated based on the buyer's location rather than the seller's. This has disproportionately affected cities with significant industrial or warehousing operations, as many large transactions now generate tax revenue for other jurisdictions rather than the cities where the businesses are physically located. SB 5518 received a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 18th while HB 1532 is scheduled for an executive session in the House Finance Committee on February 25th. WPPA is neutral on this bill but is monitoring it given that we have members who are engaged.

Renewable Energy Personal Property Tax Exemption

[HB 1960](#), sponsored by Rep. Ramel (D-40th LD, Bellingham), would establish a personal property tax exemption for renewable energy facilities (wind, solar, battery storage only) that generate at least fifty megawatts of power and replaces that property tax obligation with a new renewable energy excise tax. The proceeds from that excise tax would be distributed between the state and local governments based on the location of the facilities. Under the current version of the bill, local taxing districts receiving revenue from those facilities must permanently reduce their highest lawful levy by an amount directly corresponding to the revenue received from the new tax. Bill proponents included this as a mechanism to keep local taxing district revenues whole, while reducing the current "tax shift" impacts that are being attributed to depreciation of large-scale energy developments. The bill also mandates local investments in communities hosting renewable energy projects, creates a matching grant program, and allocates \$21.5 million (Climate Commitment Act Funds) each biennium to capacity grants for federally recognized tribes. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Finance Committee on February 24th. WPPA is still evaluating the bill and how it affects energy challenges in the state, but we plan to engage at the hearing and raise concerns about its impact to port tax levy authorities, among other potential issues.

Transportation

Supply Chain Competitiveness

[SB 5649/](#)[HB 1860](#), sponsored by Sen. Liias (D-21st LD, Edmonds) and Rep. Reed (D-36th LD, Seattle), creates the Supply Chain Competitiveness Infrastructure Program, a grant and loan program overseen by WSDOT. This is a legislative priority for WPPA. The program would provide funding for port and port-adjacent projects which result in removing supply chain barriers or bottlenecks for some of Washington's most important industries including agriculture, aerospace, manufacturing and clean energy. The House version was passed out of the House Committee on

Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans on February 19th and has been referred to the Transportation Committee. The Senate version is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 25th. WPPA will again testify in support alongside our member ports.

Electric Vehicle Charging Installation:

[SB 5528](#), sponsored by Sen. Liias (D-21st LD, Edmonds), would require that contractors installing electric vehicle charging stations are certified and trained to do so. This is intended to ensure safety and consistency in the work performed. The bill was amended to remove the training requirement for the installation of state-funded charging infrastructure. This week, the bill was pulled from the Senate Rules Committee and is now on the Senate floor calendar, where it could be scheduled for a vote at any time.

Train Length Restrictions:

[HB 1862](#), sponsored by Rep. Santos (D-37th LD, Seattle), would limit the length of trains operating within the state to 8,500 feet, citing safety concerns associated with longer trains. The bill proposes fines starting at \$25,000 for the first offense and escalating for subsequent violations. WPPA is concerned that such restrictions could disrupt freight operations, leading to increased transportation costs and delays in the supply chain. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Transportation Committee on February 24th. WPPA will testify in opposition citing concerns that the policy will erode port competitiveness.

Streamlining Transportation Project Permitting:

[HB 1902](#), sponsored by Rep. Richards (D-26th LD, Gig Harbor), would direct the Washington State Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Department of Ecology, to convene a work group of state, local, and tribal representatives to develop recommendations to streamline the permitting of transportation projects. The bill received a hearing in the House Transportation Committee on February 17th. WPPA supports this effort and requested that port districts be added to the bill.

Road Usage Charge:

[HB 1921/SB 5726](#), sponsored by Rep. Fey (D-27th LD, Tacoma) and Sen. Ramos (D-5th LD, Issaquah), would begin the implementation of a road usage charge (RUC) program. The bill outlines a voluntary RUC program from July 2027 to July 2031, followed by a mandatory phase-in between July 2029 and July 2035, targeting light-duty electric and hybrid-electric vehicles, as well as light-duty internal combustion vehicles with a fuel economy rating of twenty miles per gallon or greater. The RUC is set at 2.6 cents per mile, with provisions to offset the amount due by the fuel tax paid and to waive existing electric and hybrid-electric vehicle fees. WPPA has participated in the RUC Steering Committee since 2016. WPPA supports these bills because they include important provisions including the timed phase-in targeting hybrid and all-electric vehicles and it also requires nearly all revenue collected to be spent on the maintenance and preservation of the state's road network. This effort to create sustainable revenue for the transportation budget is a top priority for WPPA in the 2025 Legislative Session. WPPA testified in support of the House version during a public hearing in the House Transportation Committee on February 13th and in support of the Senate version in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 18th. Neither bill has been scheduled for an executive session.

Passenger-Only Ferries:

[HB 1923](#), sponsored by Rep. Nance (D-23rd LD, Kitsap County), seeks to increase passenger-only ferry service. The bill authorizes local governments, including port districts, to create passenger-only ferry service districts. The bill sponsor and proponents are bringing the bill forward to address current ferry service disruptions, ensure reliable transportation for dependent communities, and prepare for increased demand during events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup. WPPA members in ferry-served communities have been engaged in this issue, including in a meeting with the bill sponsor, Rep. Nance, Governor Ferguson, and leadership from the House and Senate Transportation Committee on Whidbey Island in December. At the hearing on February 19th, WPPA joined the Ports of South Whidbey and Olympia in a panel in support of the bill, and the Port of Everett testified in support as well. HB 1923 has not yet been scheduled for an executive session.

Workforce

No bills included in this report

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