



Washington's 2026 Legislative Session will begin on Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, marking the second year of the two-year legislative biennium. Each biennium ends with a "short session," lasting 60 days. In short sessions, lawmakers typically make modest changes to the state's in-progress biennial budgets: Operating, Capital, and Transportation.

Democrats continue to hold strong majorities of 60 percent in both the House (59-39) and Senate (30-19). A majority of this size means Democrats will have the ability to pass bonding bills such as the Capital Budget without Republican votes, but it does not constitute the full 2/3 "supermajority" that would be required to override gubernatorial vetoes. The make-up of the legislature remains mostly unchanged since Sine Die in April with all the appointed incumbents from the 2024-2025 interim successfully winning special elections in November 2025. There were some additional minor changes to leadership in the Democratic and Republican Caucuses. Click [here](#) to view the full list of legislators and leadership positions.

Briefly below, we have provided you with an overview of Governor Ferguson's supplemental budget proposal. The fiscal committees in each Chamber will hold hearings on the Ferguson proposals on Monday January 12<sup>th</sup>, giving stakeholders the opportunity to tell lawmakers which elements of the budget they support and which additions or removals should be made. The budget discussions throughout session will be shaped by ongoing fiscal strain following a combination of tax increases and spending reductions adopted in the 2025 session that temporarily closed a multi-billion-dollar shortfall. The latest [revenue forecast](#) shows continued revenue weakness and downward revisions, leaving projected state receipts lower than earlier estimates and contributing to an estimated \$2.3 billion deficit heading into the session. The next updated revenue forecast will be released before February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Lastly, WPPA's 2026 Legislative Priorities were adopted during our Annual Meeting. Our priorities can be found [here](#). Our team is ready to tackle the 2026 session and will once again be joined by contract lobbyist Marian Dacca to assist with advocacy. Marian has previously worked with WPPA's team and is also the contract lobbyist for the Port of Edmonds.

In case you're wondering who is working on which issues, here is a breakdown of our advocacy team's issue areas of focus in the Legislature:

- Aviation: James
- Broadband: Eric/Marian
- Economic Development: By Issue/Eric
- Energy: Carly
- Environment: Carly
- Governance: James
- Labor & Workforce: James
- Marinas & Recreation: James

- Natural Resources & Water: Carly
- Procurement & Prevailing Wage: James
- Tax & Revenue: Eric/Marian
- Transportation: By Issue

We strongly encourage all ports to actively engage this session, starting with [Ports and Maritime Day](#) on February 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. This event provides a critical opportunity to connect with legislators, share your port's priorities, and ensure your voice is heard in Olympia. Your participation, not just in Port Day but in the legislative process, is essential to advancing our collective agenda and shaping Washington's future.

For additional details or to share your port's legislative agenda, please connect with WPPA's advocacy team.

### **Governor Ferguson 2026 Supplemental Budget Proposal**

Each year, prior to the start of session, the Governor releases his budget proposal for the Legislature's consideration. This proposal includes a spending plan, highlights top priorities, and lays out the Governor's policy agenda for the upcoming session. The Ferguson administration has proposed a budget that focuses on 3 top priorities: housing, transportation, and affordability. [See the Governor's Budget Highlights document here.](#)

Over the duration of the session, the House and Senate will each produce their own budget proposals, and then the two chambers will negotiate their differences. We expect the House and Senate budget proposals to be released in late-February.

#### **Top Budget Highlights:**

- Supplemental Operating Budget Proposal spends just over \$79 billion, which is near the spending level in the budget passed last biennium but does still boost state spending. It closes the \$2.3 billion budget shortfall through a combination of spending reductions, revenue shifts, and funds transfers including \$1 billion from the Budget Stabilization Account ("rainy day fund").
- New Operating Budget revenue is limited to the closing of tax preferences on prescription drug wholesalers, data center refurbishments, and others.
- The proposed Transportation budget would dedicate \$3 billion over the next ten years towards highway preservation and maintenance, and the purchase of three additional ferries. Notably, this relies on bonding new transportation revenue inputs passed in the 2025 session, a proposal that was not supported by transportation policymakers House last session.

#### **Top Budget Areas of Potential Port Interest in Governor Ferguson's Budget Proposal**

*Lower Columbia River Channel Maintenance Plan:* The proposal includes \$15 million in funding for the state's initial contribution to the dredging project to maintain the channel on the lower Columbia River in partnership with the State of Oregon and the Ports of Longview, Kalama,

Vancouver, and Woodland. This is a priority for those ports and an issue that we included in our 2026 Legislative Agenda as part of our WA Trade Strategy.

*Model Toxics Control Act Funding:* The Governor maintains the funding sweeps at the same levels that passed last session. No additional transfers to the general are proposed in the supplemental budget, although transfers to the general fund will occur in FY2026.

*Climate Commitment Act Revenue:* Much focus and debate has been on the Governor's proposal to utilize \$569 million from the Climate Commitment Account, cap-and-invest auction revenue, to pay for the [Working Family Tax Credit](#) that provides credit to low and moderate-income families. This has historically been funded out of the general fund.

*Capital Budget Clean Energy Investments:* There are a few new investments in clean energy in the capital budget proposal including \$12.5 million for the Washington Green Bank Program and \$30 million additional for the Clean Energy Fund tribal energy development grants.

*Tariff resilience and support:* The Department of Commerce requested funds to assist small businesses who are impacted by current tariff upheaval, and the Governor's budget included \$400,000 for that purpose. WPPA will work with our WA Trade Strategy coalition to see how we can support this request.

*Budget, Tax, and Revenue Swaps:* WPPA will monitor developments in the budget, tax, and revenue arenas for the duration of session. Given the budget challenges, we will be focused on protecting funding that supports economic development, trade, and port related programs. Last year, many of the final budget decisions were negotiated during the last two weeks of the legislative session.

#### [Governor Ferguson's 2026 Supplemental Bill Documents](#)

- [Supplemental Operating Budget Bill](#)
- [Supplemental Transportation Budget Bill](#)
- [Supplemental Capital Budget Bill](#)

The budget proposal presented by the Governor to the Legislature provides an initial framework for the 2026 session, but it should be viewed as a starting point rather than a directive.

Lawmakers will ultimately craft their own operating, capital, and transportation supplemental budgets, informed by revenue forecasts, caucus priorities, and policy tradeoffs.

Governor Ferguson has outlined high-level priorities emphasizing fiscal restraint, affordability, and protection of core services, but the Legislature retains broad discretion in shaping final outcomes. With fiscal uncertainty, competing priorities, and impacts of federal level policy and funding changes, the 2026 session is expected to be fluid, and there is a strong likelihood that legislative budget proposals will move in different directions before final agreements are reached.

We will keep our members informed and updated throughout the session with our weekly legislative reports which will be sent via email and posted to the WPPA website each Saturday.

**Session Cutoff Dates:**

Jan. 12 - Day 1	Session begins
Feb. 4 - Day 24	Policy cutoff in house of origin - last day to pass bills out of House policy committees and Senate policy committees in the chamber they were introduced
Feb. 9 - Day 29	Fiscal cutoff in house of origin - last day to pass bills out of fiscal committees in the chamber they were introduced
Feb. 17 - Day 37	House of origin cutoff - Last day to pass bills out of the chamber they were introduced in. House bills out of House, senate bills out of Senate (5pm deadline)
Feb. 25 - Day 45	Opposite house policy cutoff – all bills from the other chamber must pass out of house/senate policy committees
Mar. 2 - Day 50	Opposite house fiscal cutoff – all bills from other chamber must pass out of House/Senate fiscal committees
Mar. 6 - Day 54	Last day to pass opposite house bills (5pm deadline)
Mar. 12 - Day 60	Last day of Session - Sine Die!

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