

2025 Legislative Session Overview

January 13, 2025, marked the start of a new biennial legislative session in Washington State. As the first year of the 2-year session, it lasted 105 days, culminating on Sunday, April 27th. The "long" session included the adoption of new, two-year State Operating, Capital, and Transportation Budgets, as well as several key policy proposals.

Like in recent sessions, the House and Senate Democrats held the legislative majority. However, this year, they boasted near supermajority membership. For the first time in twelve years, a new Governor, Bob Ferguson, was sworn in at the beginning of the session. Three other new statewide elected officials began their first terms at the start of the legislative session: Attorney General Nick Brown, Insurance Commissioner Patty Kuderer, and Commissioner of Public Lands Dave Upthegrove.

The legislature faced a major challenge as it began its work with an estimated \$10-12 billion revenue shortfall for the 4-year budget outlook. A subsequent revenue forecast after the session began predicted an even greater deficit, as much as \$16 billion by some estimates. Governor Ferguson immediately stated that he favored cuts in expenses over options for new revenue. He began his term by asking state agencies for an additional \$4 billion in expense reductions. He also made it clear that he would pursue fulfilling his campaign promise to provide \$100 million in new state funding support for local law enforcement, despite the estimated revenue deficit.

In addition to the budget, the legislature entered the new session with priorities for public safety, gun control, housing, and education funding. Several bills were drafted and considered to address each priority.

Despite all the challenges, the legislative session wrapped on time. The state operating budget included significant cuts to programs that will impact counties. However, the cuts were less severe than initially feared. The operating and transportation budgets also included about \$4.4 billion in new funding from targeted tax increases, some of which may significantly benefit counties, including the Governor's request for \$100 million for grants for local law enforcement.

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County Legislative Priorities

To prepare for the 2025 legislative session, the Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) spent considerable time developing and implementing a new system for crafting WSAC's 2025-26 Legislative Agenda. The new method was designed to ensure a balanced legislative agenda that considers issues important to larger, more populated counties (urban) and smaller, less-populous counties (rural) equally. In November, the LSC adopted an extremely ambitious legislative agenda featuring 7 distinct priorities.



Fiscal Sustainability

The Challenge – Counties are the least financially-diversified governments in the state. <u>Property tax, with its limited growth potential, is our main revenue source.</u>

The Fix – Support the following strategies to improve county fiscal health: 1. Revise the 1% annual property tax growth limit to 3%; 2. Implement a local graduated REET; 3. Implement a county utility tax; and 4. Allocate a greater share of cannabis revenue to local governments.

OUTCOMES

HB 2049/SB 5812 proposed, among other things, to replace the 1% annual property tax growth limit with the rate of inflation plus the county population growth rate, not to exceed 3%.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1704 and **SB 5547** both proposed new, albeit different, levels of increased funding appropriations of state cannabis sales tax revenue for local governments.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 2027 would have, among other things, implemented a new Real Estate Excise Tax policy for counties. The new policy would have implemented higher tax rates for property sales over \$1.5 million and lower tax rates for property sales under \$500,000.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1702 proposed a new utility tax authority for counties up to 3%.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



Public Defense Reform

The Challenge – The state must provide adequate funding to meet existing and future requirements for trial court public defense. Counties cannot continue to shoulder the vast majority of this burden alone.

The Fix – Provide state funding sufficient to ensure counties can meet the constitutional right to effective access to justice through effective legal representation.

OUTCOME

HB 1592/SB 5404 would have made the state and county each responsible for 50% of the current costs for public defense services. The state would be responsible for all future cost increases. Counties could also choose to have the state take over public defense services.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



County Transportation System Viability

The Challenge – Counties are responsible for nearly half of our state's roads and bridges, but the system in place for providing resources to maintain them is inadequate.

The Fix – Support the following strategies: 1. Revise the 1% the annual property tax growth rate limit to 3%; 2. Implement a Road Usage Charge (RUC) program to replace the gas tax with requirements that counties support; and 3. Provide new grant authority and funding for the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, and Reducing Rural Roadway Departures Program.

OUTCOMES

HB 2049/SB 5812 proposed, among other things, to replace the 1% annual property tax growth limit with the rate of inflation plus the county population growth rate, not to exceed 3%.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1921/SB 5726 would have established a process for phasing in a RUC program. The bill created the RUC Highway Account and allocated revenue to local jurisdictions in accordance with gas tax distributions to be used for preservation and maintenance.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1098/SB 5544 would have established a new grant program for local county access roads. The legislation was aligned with a top recommendation from the Grant Effectiveness Study done by CRAB last year.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED (However, the program is established in the Transportation Budget)





Clean Energy Project Benefits

The Challenge – When the Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council (EFSEC) issues a siting approval for a clean energy project and construction or operation begins, they prefer to work with local government service providers for help with inspections, reviews, and other technical tasks. However, local governments may face liability risks from violating their own development codes if the projects EFSEC oversees don't conform to local land use regulations.

The Fix – Provide local government liability protection when providing services during the construction and operational phases of EFSEC-approved projects.

OUTCOMES

SB 5317 amends state law to afford local governments liability protections from appeals and claims related to state law and local development code violations when cooperating with EFSEC to provide services after the Governor approves siting certification.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED



Improving Behavioral Health

The Challenge – We must address systemic gaps and barriers that prevent people from accessing the services they need and make Medicaid work for community behavioral healthcare. Current Medicaid managed care policy defining adequate networks of behavioral healthcare does not recognize the full range and scope of behavioral health capacity needs.

The Fix – Improve contractual standards through Medicaid reprocurement.

OUTCOMES

E2SHB 1813 concerned the reprocurement of medical assistance services, including the realignment of behavioral health crisis services for Medicaid enrollees. It requires the Health Care Authority (Authority) to adjust Medicaid rates to reflect increases and decreases in service facilities and capacity. It also requires the Authority's preparations for the reprocurement of Medicaid managed care contracts to consider methodologies for measuring network access and adequacy, as well as contract amendments for reduce administrative burdens for health care providers. The Authority must direct managed care organizations to establish, continue, or expand delegation arrangements with behavioral health administrative services organizations for crisis services.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED



County Housing Strategies

The Challenge – Many of the homes our state needs to improve housing access and affordability will not be built in cities. In our state, 34% of residents live in unincorporated areas. However, counties have limited tools to address the housing crisis.

The Fix – Support the following strategies: 1. Authorize detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) outside urban areas; 2. Authorize counties to increase density in appropriate areas for middle housing options; 3. Expand access to the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program; 4. Invest state funding in developing infrastructure that supports housing development; and 5. Provide funding for counties to offer predesigned and approved housing plans.

OUTCOMES

HB 1345/SB 5470 would have authorized detached ADUs outside of urban growth areas (UGA) on all residential lots with certain requirements.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

ESB 5471 authorizes counties to increase density for residential development in all UGAs and LAMIRDs to support middle housing development without the risk of appeals, with certain requirements.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

HB 1206/SB 5679 would have expanded the MFTE program to all GMA-planning counties for new multi-family developments within UGAs.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

Capital Budget Proviso would have appropriated \$250,000 for WSAC to work with South Puget Sound Community College to develop preapproved housing plans for small-scale single-family homes, duplexes, and ADUs in 4 counties as a pilot program.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



Support Rural County Coroners

The Challenge – In 2021, the legislature passed HB 1326, requiring counties with populations under 40,000 to have an independent coroner by 2025. This mandate impacts 13 rural counties where cost is a major obstacle.

The Fix – Provide state funding support to the impacted counties.

OUTCOMES

SB 5089 would have provided 6 years of funding support to the 13 rural counties to allow them time to adjust.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



New County Revenue and Cost Savings

Despite WSAC's revenue proposals failing to pass, the legislature did include substantial local government funding benefits in its revenue bills and different portions of the State Operating and Transportation Budgets. WSAC has been working to update the annual 1% growth limit on local property tax revenue for many years. Our proposal this year, to change the limit to the rate of inflation plus the rate of population growth (HB 2049/SB 5812), received strong support in both the House and Senate for the first time. However, it ultimately failed after Governor Ferguson signaled his opposition.

ESHB 2015 authorizes a new .1% sales tax authority for local governments. With councilmanic approval until June 30, 2028, or with a majority approval of voters, counties can collect an additional .1% on all retail sales for criminal justice purposes. The bill also includes a grant program for local governments to hire, retain, and train law enforcement officers, peer counselors, and behavioral health personnel working in co-response to increase community policing and public safety. The legislature appropriated \$100 million for the grant program.

ESSB 5801 includes permanent new funding for counties from the gas tax increase (\$9.661 million for the 25-27 biennium), plus additional general fund revenue from filing fee increases (approximately \$3.507 million for the 25-27 biennium).

ESSB 5357 sets the base unfunded actuarial liability rates for the PERS 1 pension program to zero through fiscal year 2029. Removing this obligation saves local governments (including counties) a total of \$261.1 million in the 25-27 biennium.

ESSB 5814 removes the exemptions from retail sales taxes on select services and certain nicotine products. Counties will collect and retain the local portion of sales taxes.



The County Connection is the official podcast of the Washington State Association of Counties, where we dive into the legislative issues of the day. For more in-depth discussion on what's happening in Olympia during the session, check out our library of discussions on everything from budgets to public safety, infrastructure to housing, and more.

When the session is over, listen for great discussions about innovative programs counties are implementing across the state for law enforcement, criminal diversion, housing, public health, water resource management, environmental programs, and more.

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General Government -



Labor Relations

HB 1002 would have classified post-traumatic stress disorder as a presumptive occupational disease for county coroners and medical examiners.

WSAC Position: NEUTRAL **Outcome: FAILED**

HB 1070 would have classified post-traumatic stress disorder as a presumptive occupational disease for correctional officers.

WSAC Position: NEUTRAL Outcome: FAILED

E2SHB 1213 expanded state-paid family and medical leave benefits to employees after 6 months.

WSAC Position: NEUTRAL **Outcome: PASSED**

HB 1622 would have required employers to negotiate with employee bargaining units before adopting new technology containing artificial intelligence under certain circumstances.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE **Outcome: FAILED**

SSB 5040 removed the threshold exempting uniformed personnel in counties under 10,000 population from interest arbitration rights.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: PASSED

ESSB 5041 granted striking or locked-out union workers unemployment insurance benefits, including public employees, unless a final judgment declares the strike illegal.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE **Outcome: PASSED**

SSB 5503 prevents employers from requiring a worker to waive any statutory right to make a claim arising out of state or federal law as a condition of settling a grievance.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: PASSED



Taxes

SHB 1650 allows counties to utilize REET funds for capital projects at county-owned airports.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

HB 1702 would have authorized counties to collect a 3% tax on utilities from providers servicing unincorporated businesses and residents.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

SHB 1791 correlates the allowed uses of REET 1 & 2 funds and makes permanent the allowances for maintenance and operation of capital projects and affordable housing.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT **Outcome: PASSED**

HB 2049 would have replaced the 1% annual property tax growth limit with a limit based on the rate of inflation plus the county population growth rate, not to exceed 3% per year.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



Finance

HB 1042 would have authorized county treasurers to recover their costs for providing services.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1044 would have replaced the current \$5 filing fee on a real estate excise tax affidavit with a new \$20 fee, to be increased every four years based on inflation.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



Risk Management

HB 1380 would have required counties that regulate access to public spaces to be objectively reasonable as to time, place, and manner.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE **Outcome: FAILED**

SB 5098 would have made the possession of a weapon in all park facilities at which children are likely to be present, county buildings, and county fairs. Counties would have been required to post signs informing attendees of the law.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED



Administration

SB 5154 would have modified the county auditor duties in law.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED

SB 5288 removed the portions of state law (RCWs 36.32.070 and 36.32.0558) that conflict with the Washington State Constitution related to vacancies on boards of county commissioners.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED



Elections

HB 1030 would have provided only two options to fulfill post-election audit requirements: a limited hand-count audit or a risk-limiting audit.

WSAC Position: NEUTRAL Outcome: FAILED

HB 1146 would have required counties to create a voting plan for each jail and hospital in the county. Jails would have been required to implement the plan and provide voting services to inmates.

WSAC Position: CONCERNS **Outcome: FAILED**

HB 1710 would have required certain counties to obtain preclearance that certain proposed changes to their election systems will not diminish the ability of a protected class to participate in the political process or elect their preferred candidates.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED

ESSB 5014 requires counties to implement certain requirements from the Secretary of State to meet election security standards.

WSAC Position: NEUTRAL Outcome: PASSED



S) Budget Highlights

\$10 million for assistance in accessing federal tax incentives and grants.

\$24 million for the state's share of election costs.

Core funding for the Municipal Research Services Center.

All state-shared revenues are maintained, including liquor taxes and profits, cannabis excise tax, streamlined sales tax, county criminal justice assistance, and city-county assistance.

\$23 million for developing community electric vehicle infrastructure.

Transportation & Infrastructure



Safety and Operations

HB 1145 would have required counties to collect and maintain records related to almost all county maintenance or construction activity on county

WSACE Position: OPPOSE **Outcome: FAILED**

SB 5215 would require vehicles operating on a paved public highway and carrying a load of dirt, sand, pebbles, cobbles, gravel, or any aggregate material to be covered beginning January 1, 2028.

WSACE Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED SB 5319 increases surface mine reclamation permit fees.

WSACE Position: NEUTRAL **Outcome: PASSED**

ESSB 5627 modifies several requirements in the Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act relating to, in part, notice before excavation, duties before and during excavation, and duties when excavation causes damage to certain underground infrastructure.

WSACE Position: NEUTRAL **Outcome: PASSED**



Public Works Procurement

SB 5176 aimed to ensure prompt payment to contractors and subcontractors.

WSACE Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

E2SHB 1549 adds additional responsible bidder requirements for contractors and requires them to submit an Apprentice Utilization Plan for certain public works projects.

WSACE Position: NEUTRAL Outcome: PASSED

SB 5061 required that public works contracts stipulate that the hourly minimum wage for laborers, workers, or mechanics must be adjusted each year to be at least the latest prevailing rate in effect at the time the work is performed. The bill excluded Small Works Roster projects.

WSACE Position: NEUTRAL Outcome: FAILED



Transportation Planning

SB 5374 would have amended RCW 36.81.121, requiring counties to coordinate with tribal governments when preparing the county's Comprehensive Transportation Program.

Outcome: FAILED **WSACE Position: SUPPORT**



Infrastructure Revenue

SB 5804 would have redirected revenue sources currently distributed into the Public Works Assistance Account and instead deposited them into the state General Fund. The bill authorized the issuance of special tax obligation bonds in a total amount of \$5 billion and dedicated the proceeds to projects that improve salmon and steelhead recovery and habitat restoration.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED



S) Budget Highlights

\$365 million for the Public Works Board to award new or reimburse previously authorized grants and loans to local governments for infrastructure projects.

\$114 million to provide matching funds to public or tribal government lead entities for Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Grants.

\$42 million over six years in new Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax distribution to counties.

\$32 million for Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board Projects.

\$22 million to extend the Federal Fund Exchange Pilot Program through the 2025-27 biennium.

\$21 million starting in the 2027-29 biennium for the new CRAB Local Road Program.

\$21 million additional in the 2027-29 biennium for TIB Complete Streets Program.

\$5.5 million to continue the Reducing Rural Roadway Departures Program for 2025-27.

\$2.8 million over six years in new Gross Vehicle Weight Fee distributions to San Juan and Island counties.

\$400 thousand to continue work on the Fish Passage Barrier Optimization Model.

Housing



Housing

2SHB 1183 requires local governments to allow intrusion into setbacks for passive housing development, prohibits local governments from requiring façade modulation or upper-level setbacks for various housing types, and prohibits local governments from requiring off-street parking for certain housing developments if the adjacent road is developed to a city standard.

WSAC position: NEUTRAL Outcome: PASSED

HB 1717/SB 5591 would have created a sales tax remittance program for affordable housing developments in which the local jurisdiction where the development occurs receives 50% of the state sales tax revenue associated with the project to be used for local homeless housing or affordable housing programs.

WSAC position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1818/SB 5633 proposed a rewrite to Chapter 58.17 RCW, overhauling the current state statute governing the parcel subdivision process.

WSAC position: CONCERNS Outcome: FAILED

HB 1858 requires financial institutions to pay a document recording fee when transferring mortgages or deeds of trust, generating significant new revenue for local homeless housing programs.

WSAC position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

SHB 1899 removes the statutory requirement that the Point-In-Time Count of homeless individuals be conducted annually, providing administrative and financial relief for county housing programs.

WSAC position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

SB 5729 would have removed the ability to review project permits for completeness, required approval of any permit that included more than three requests for information from a local government, and prohibited a local government from requiring project permits for specific projects involving an existing structure.

WSAC position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED



Budget Highlights

\$215 million for the new construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of affordable housing projects for low-income and special needs populations.

\$100 million for the Apple Health and Homes rapid permanent supportive housing program.

\$10 million to acquire, renovate, and prepare real property for rapid conversion into enhanced emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, youth housing, tiny homes, or shelters.

\$117.6 million to backfill the shortfall in local document recording fees.

\$50 million for affordable housing for low-income people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

\$50 million for affordable housing preservation projects.

\$75 million to develop home ownership projects that are affordable for first-time low-income households.

\$111 million to maintain or increase current emergency housing capacity.

\$62 million for operation, maintenance, and service costs of permanent supportive housing projects.

\$297.37 million for Housing and Employment case management services funded through the 1115 Medicaid waiver.

Natural Resources, Environment, & Land Use



Land Use

E2SSB 5148 sets up a process by which counties may submit the housing element of their comprehensive land use plan and any implementing ordinances to the Department of Commerce for review and a determination of compliance. Jurisdictions that do not voluntarily submit to the review process may be chosen for targeted review.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: PASSED

ESHB 1135 requires that the Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB) may not find a local government in compliance unless the local government has amended the portion of its plans or regulations that were found noncompliant, and the amendments addressing the noncompliance finding are compliant with the requirements of the GMA.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: PASSED

HB 1303 would have added an "Environmental Justice Element" to the SEPA process using definitions and standards developed in the 2021 HEAL Act.

WSAC Position: CONCERNS Outcome: FAILED

HB 1057 would have created support for counties to access grant writing and matching funds. It would have prioritized rural and frontier counties.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1443 would have required local jurisdictions to allow one additional mobile dwelling per residential lot with certain requirements.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED

ESSB 5184 prohibits counties (in areas where roads are built to city standards) from requiring more than 0.5 parking spots per multifamily unit or one spot per single-family home. Jurisdictions may not require parking spots for buildings undergoing a change of use from nonresidential to residential, residences under 1200 square feet, commercial buildings under 3000 square feet, affordable housing, senior housing, childcare facilities, or ground-level nonresidential units in mixed-use developments.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: PASSED



Water

HB 1947 provides that new group B public water systems are not required to be owned or operated by a satellite management agency unless it provides fire flow, has atmospheric storage, serves ten or more connections, or must provide treatment to meet water quality standards.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

ESSB 5303 extended the water supply milestone for the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan to 2035.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

SHB 1670 directs the Department of Ecology to create a public website for providing information about sewage spills.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

SB 5660 would have made it possible for more properties to have access to water and sewer systems.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



HB 1847 would have exempted distributed energy resources and community solar projects from SEPA requirements and prohibited counties from excluding agrivoltaics from designated agricultural resource lands.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE **Outcome: FAILED**

SSB 5359 would have established a clean energy development office within the Department of Commerce to, among other things, provide assistance to local governments for the siting and development of clean energy projects.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1960 would have exempted commercial solar and wind energy projects from personal property tax, replacing it with a nameplate capacity tax.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



Cannabis

HB 1346 and HB 1940 presented opportunities to create consistency among licensing circumstances for retailers, producers, and processors, requiring consideration of local codes and regulations.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1835 would have better aligned cannabis licensing decisions with local zoning ordinances.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED



HB 1508 would have authorized the Department of Natural Resources to market ecosystem service projects on state trust lands for afforestation, reforestation, and aquatics projects.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

Solid Waste Management

E2SSB 5284 will create an extended producer responsibility program for paper and packaging products, beginning in 2030.

Position: CONCERNS Outcome: PASSED

2SHB 1497 creates color and labeling requirements for solid waste carts and other containers.

Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

HB 2018 was introduced on behalf of WSAC and would have increased the current Solid Waste Collection Tax by 2.5% gradually over five years. The revenue would be directed to counties to implement their Solid Waste Management Plans.

Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

2SHB 1154 provides local health jurisdictions financial enforcement tools for solid waste handling facilities. It creates a mechanism for a local public health jurisdiction to defer enforcement to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) if needed, as well as the opportunity for Ecology to enforce without deferral if it deems the local health response inadequate.

Position: CONCERNS **Outcome: PASSED**

HB 1607/SB 5502 would have created a deposit return program for qualifying beverage containers.

Position: CONCERNS Outcome: FAILED



\$23 million to assist the DNR in acquiring working forestlands to replace structurally complex, carbon-dense forested state trust lands designated for conservation and for existing encumbered state forestlands.

\$100 million for the Connecting Housing to Infrastructure (CHIP) grants.

\$22.544 million to assist local government climate planning implementation.

\$18 million for local comprehensive land use planning updates.

\$5 million to Commerce to support siting and permitting clean energy projects.

\$24 million from MTCA for Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance funding to local governments.

BILL OUTCOMES & BUDGET Public Health ————



Public Health

HB 1947 lets new Group B public water systems operate on their own—without needing to be run by a satellite system management agency—as long as they meet certain conditions. This was a WSALPHO priority bill.

WSALPHO Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

ssb 5163 provides important updates to local child fatality review statutes. These reviews identify community strategies that can prevent further death and injury for our youth. Updates include increasing the youth age to 19, aligning privacy and confidentiality to national standards, and emphasizing coordination between local and state agencies. This was a WSALPHO priority bill.

WSALPHO Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

SB 5605 would have authorized the operation of private home kitchens to prepare food sold to the public and set permit responsibilities to local health departments and the state board of health. The proposal also exempted home kitchens from several food safety requirements.

WSALPHO Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED

HB 1870 authorized counties to implement a property tax solely for the purposes of operating public health clinics such as prevention care, STI clinics, immunization clinics, etc.

WSALPHO Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

SB 5244 exempts the MA licensure requirements for staff to conduct simple blood tests like finger or heel sticks at WIC clinics as part of the program requirements. This allows for any WIC program staff trained to conduct this screening service. The change provides better customer service for participating families and addresses some workforce challenges that impact the ability to operate local WIC clinics.

WSALPHO Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

ESHB 1946 clarifies tribal representation for local boards of health, removes the American Indian Health Commission from the appointment process, narrows organizational membership, and directs the State Board of Health to conduct rulemaking on appointment timelines and processes.

WSALPHO Position: NEUTRAL Outcome: PASSED



Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS): Funding for FPHS was reduced by **\$24 million** for the biennium. This is largely reflected in reductions in General Funds State which totaled **\$44 million** for the biennium (split evenly as **\$22 million** reductions each fiscal year). These reductions are offset by an increase of **\$20 million** of FPHS Account spending authorization. Depending on the total FPHS Account balance, each FY year is reduced **\$12-\$22 million**. Preserving FPHS funding was a WSALPHO Budget Priority.

School-Based Health Centers: Both Operating and Capital Budgets including support to operate and maintain school-based health centers. These facilities are becoming more critical health care access points for youth behavioral health services, dental clinics, and other preventative primary care services. Total including in the budget: **\$2.4 million** – Operating Budget and **\$2.6 million** – Capital Budget.

Opioid Response/Support: This year's budget made several reductions in opioid response and overdose prevention, focusing state support and investment on fulfilling state obligations.

- Community-based and harm reduction approaches to overdose prevention were removed. These include a naloxone stockpile, community education campaigns, and sustainable funding for a data dashboard.
- Funding to support Health Engagement Hubs was reduced by **\$500 thousand**. Hubs are intended to serve as an all-in-one location where people who use drugs can access a range of medical, harm reduction, treatment, social services, and referrals.
- **\$2.7 million** is dedicated to launch a tele-buprenorphine hotline that facilitates access to medications for opioid use disorder treatment.
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) are designed to ensure access to coordinated, comprehensive behavioral health care. CCBHCs are required to get people into care quickly and serve anyone who requests care for mental health or substance use regardless of ability to pay, place of residence, or age. This includes developmentally appropriate care for children and youth. \$886 thousand was dedicated to supporting CCBHCs.
- The Recovery Care Navigator Program, implemented locally by counties, is an intensive outreach and case management program was reduced by 20%.

Group B Water Systems: Ongoing funding has supported local health jurisdictions that maintain local Group B programs. This funding was reduced to **\$832 thousand**, a reduction of **\$152 thousand**. These funds are used to support the costs of the development and adoption of rules, policies, and procedures, as well as for technical assistance, training, and other program-related costs.

Home Visiting: This is a valuable program where nurses and parents work together to strengthen and support a child's first year of life. This program was reduced by **\$6 million**.

Public Safety & Human Services



Public Safety

ESHB 2015 creates a Local Law Enforcement Grant Program to be administered by the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) and authorizes a new local 0.1 percent sales and use tax for criminal justice purposes.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

2SHB 1359 establishes a task force to review and make recommended changes to laws related to criminal insanity and competency to stand trial. Also recodifies sections of law relating to criminal insanity and competency to stand trial under topical subject headings. WSAC is directed and funded to manage the task force.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

SHB 1811 adds individuals engaged in co-response services to the list of first responders who may not be compelled to testify about their communications with recipients of peer support services. Also adds members of first response teams engaged in co-response during a public health emergency to the definition of "frontline employees" to presume that an infectious or contagious disease was acquired during employment under the Workers' Compensation program.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

E2SSB 5278 concerned the management of individuals who are placed in juvenile rehabilitation institutions.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

SB 5296 attempted to address and improve outcomes for individuals adjudicated for juvenile offenses by increasing opportunities for community placement options and refining procedural requirements. The bill largely shifted program and service responsibility, as well as funding obligations, from the state to the counties.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED



Human Services

E2SHB 1813 concerned the reprocurement of medical assistance services, including the realignment of behavioral health crisis services for medicaid enrollees. It requires the Health Care Authority (Authority) to adjust Medicaid rates to reflect increases and decreases in service facilities and capacity. It also requires the Authority's preparations for the reprocurement of Medicaid managed care contracts to consider methodologies for measuring network access and adequacy, as well as contract amendments to reduce administrative burdens for health care providers. The Authority must direct managed care organizations to establish, continue, or expand delegation arrangements with behavioral health administrative services organizations (BHASOs) for crisis services.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED

HB 1218 was concerned with persons referred for competency evaluation and restoration services.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: FAILED

HB 1158 required the Department of Social and Health Services Developmental Disabilities Administration to contract directly with service providers for the delivery of community inclusion services.

WSAC Position: OPPOSE Outcome: FAILED

E2SSB 5745 deals with legal representation under the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA). It addresses requirements and procedures for appointing defense counsel. It also defines "state facilities" and specifies that the Attorney General represents state facilities in ITA proceedings.

WSAC Position: SUPPORT Outcome: PASSED



Sudget Highlights

\$27.2 million for public defense, maintaining recent funding levels (**\$10.6** million or **\$5.3** million per year), but also adding **\$16.6** million in new funding (an additional **\$8.3** million per year). Funding for public defense is a WSAC legislative priority.

\$15.398 million in one-time funds from the state 988 account is provided for startup costs, operational subsidies, and rates for non-Medicaid enrollees for three Crisis Relief Centers (23-hour facilities).

\$1 million is provided from the state 988 account to purchase electric vans for endorsed 988 mobile crisis teams.

\$962 thousand is provided for administrative costs to implement E2SSB 5745 (ITA council). Under the bill, additional funding is provided for the costs associated with providing defense services to patients in King County.

20 percent reduction for outreach and intensive case management funding for Recovery Navigator Program (RNP) services.

\$100 million is provided to implement ESHB 2015 (Public safety funding).

\$90 thousand is provided to implement 2SHB 1359 (Criminal insanity).

Policy and Legislative Relations Staff



Derek Young *Executive Director*(360) 999-0029
dyoung@wsac.org



Travis DuttonPolicy Coordinator
(503) 999-3415
tdutton@wsac.org



Kelsey Hulse Contract Lobbyist (425) 306-3614 kelsey@propolis.buzz



Paul Jewell Government Relations Director (360) 489-3024 pjewell@wsac.org



Curtis Steinhauer
Policy Coordinator
(360) 580-2301
csteinhauer@wsac.org



Brad Banks

Contract Lobbyist
(360) 918-6508
brad@banksconsulting
group.com



Jaime Bodden
Managing Director,
Washington State
Association of Local
Public Health Officials
(WSALPHO)
(360) 489-3011
jbodden@wsac.org



Chris Goodwin
FPHS Policy Advisor
(564) 200-3166
cgoodwin@wsac.org



Brian Enslow
Contract Lobbyist
(360) 489-8121
brian@arbutusllc.com



Axel Swanson
Managing Director,
Washington State
Association of County
Engineers (WSACE)
(360) 489-3014
aswanson@wsac.org



Brianna Steere FPHS Policy Advisor (564) 200-3171 bsteere@wsac.org

Legislative Steering Committee

The Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) is responsible for preparing and recommending a proposed legislative agenda for each biennial legislative session. The LSC monitors the events of each legislative session and is empowered to adopt policy relating to legislation, executive branch policies and operation, and the activities of other organizations and associations.



38 counties involved

Carolina Mejia, Co-Chair

Thurston County Commissioner **Kevin Overbay, Co-Chair**Chelan County

Commissioner

LSC Roster

Dan Blankenship

Adams County Commissioner

Chris Seubert

Asotin County
Commissioner

Michael Alverez

Benton County Commissioner

Kevin Overbay

Chelan County Commissioner

Mark Ozias

Clallam County Commissioner

Michelle Belkot

Clark County Councilor

Glen Yung

Clark County Councilor (Alternate)

Marty Hall

Columbia County Commissioner

Richard Dahl

Cowlitz County Commissioner

Dan Sutton

Douglas County Commissioner

Zack Trudell

Ferry County Commissioner Stephen Bauman

Franklin County Commissioner

Jim Nelson

Garfield County Commissioner

Kevin Burgess

Grant County Commissioner

Georgia Miller

Grays Harbor County Commissioner

Jill Johnson

Island County Commissioner

Heidi Eisenhour

Jefferson County Commissioner

Christine Rolfes

Kitsap County Commissioner

Katie Walters

Kitsap County Commissioner (Alternate)

Laura Osiadacz

Kittitas County Commissioner

Lori Zoller

Klickitat County Commissioner Sean Swope

Lewis County Commissioner

Scott Hutsell

Lincoln County Commissioner

Sharon Trask

Mason County Commissioner

Jon Neal

Okanogan County Commissioner

Lisa Olsen

Pacific County Commissioner

Jerry Doyle

Pacific County Commissioner (Alternate)

John Gentle

Pend Oreille County Commissioner

Robyn Denson

Pierce County Councilmember

Jani Hitchen

Pierce County Councilmember (Alternate)

Ryan Mello

Pierce County Executive Jaime Smith

Pierce County Executive (Alternate)

Jane Fulle

San Juan County Councilmember

Lisa Janicki

Skagit County Commissioner

Asa Leckie

Skamania County Commissioner

Megan Dunn

Snohomish County Councilmember

Dave Somers

Snohomish County Executive

Annika Vaughn

Snohomish County Executive (Alternate)

Al French

Spokane County Commissioner

Mark Burrows
Stevens County

Commissioner

Carolina Mejia Thurston County Commissioner **Wayne Fornier**

Thurston County Commissioner (Alternate)

Lee Tischer

Wahkiakum County Commissioner

Gunner Fulmer

Walla Walla County Commissioner

Kayle Galloway

Whatcom County Councilmember

Barry Buchanan

Whatcom County Councilmember (Alternate)

Satpal Sidhu

Whatcom County Executive

Art Swannack

Whitman County Commissioner

Amanda McKinney

Yakima County Commissioner



