

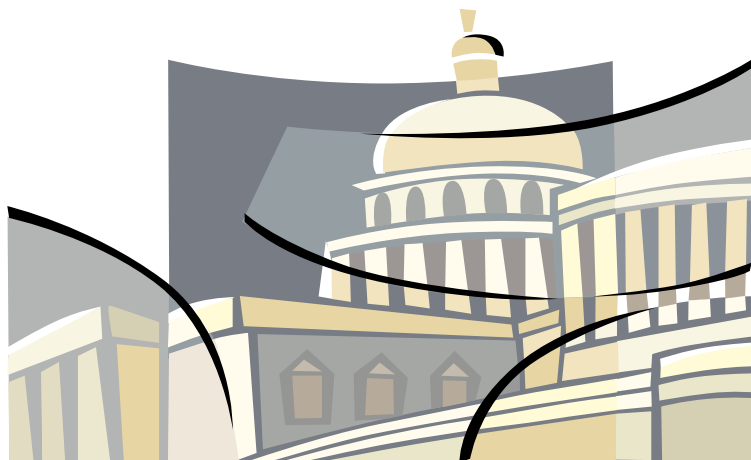


Senate Releases Its Operating Budget

Audubon and other leading conservation organizations expressed our strong disappointment with the Senate's version of the state budget. The Senate's cuts will reduce critical environmental safeguards that keep our families healthy, our air and water clean and keep natural habitats intact for birds and wildlife

The Senate budget failed to fund the newly-proposed shoreline management regulations, it phased out funding to control harmful toxic chemicals, and did not maintain funds for the Neah Bay rescue tug. In addition, the Senate eliminated funding for the Growth Management Hearing Boards and the Energy Policy Division of the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development. During the hearing on the Senate Budget (SB 5404), Senator Karen Fraser made a valiant attempt to restore funding for the Growth Management Hearing Boards, but her fellow Senators in the Ways and Means Committee voted down her excellent proposal.

Overall, the Senate's proposal cuts an additional 50% beyond the \$24.6 million in General Fund natural resource cuts proposed by Governor Locke. Environmental programs currently comprise only 1.5 percent of the State's General Fund; the Senate cuts take the percentage even lower. Instead of cutting programs, Audubon and other conservation organizations believe the Senate should have balanced the budget by increasing revenue through reasonable user fees and eliminating tax breaks for polluters.



The most often-cited example of a reasonable user fee is the water-right permit fee. This \$10 fee has not changed since 1917. Permit fees generate only \$70,000 for a program that costs \$8 million to operate – the difference of \$7,930,000 being picked up by Washington's taxpayers. Audubon is encouraging House members to adopt some fees for services that will make up the difference now paid by the tax payers.

SHORELINES

SHB 1769 (now SSB 6012): SUPPORT
Updating Shoreline Master Programs

Today, Rep. Sandra Romero improved SSB 6012 by changing the language to reflect the intent of SHB 1769 (the "good shoreline bill"). Chair Romero provided much needed leadership to ensure the preservation of the shoreline bill that we have all been supporting. SSB 6012 was passed by the Local Government Committee and was referred to the House Rules Committee.

This Shoreline Bill includes timelines and funding for local governments to update their shoreline master programs. During the spring and summer all Auduboners interested in shoreline protection and development should watch for Ecology's new proposed shoreline regulations. Ecology will hold public hearings about the regulations this coming summer. These regulations, when adopted, will govern how cities and counties update their shoreline master plans.

ATTACKS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SSB 5375: OPPOSE.... But is improving....
Improving the efficiency and predictability of the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program

Rep. Mike Cooper, chair of the House Fisheries, Ecology and Parks Committee, heard another version of the HPA bill that will re-organize the law governing the Hydraulic Application Permit program at Washington State



Department of Fish and Wildlife. Audubon is opposed to the original version of SSB 5375, but with amendments (that are still being worked on tonight, we may be able to support the bill). If you are interested in the latest version of the bill, please call our office in Olympia at 360-786-8020 x 208.



GROWTH MANAGEMENT (GMA)

SSB 5658: OPPOSE: DEAD

Best Available Science under the Growth Management Act

This bill did not pass out of the House Local Government Committee.

SSB 5282: OPPOSE : DEAD

GMA Hearing Boards

This bill eliminates the GMA boards.

SSB 5160: OPPOSE : DEAD

Authorizing certain counties to withdraw from GMA

ESSB 5680: OPPOSE : DEAD

Allowing counties with low population density to opt out of certain Growth Management Provisions

SB 5661: OPPOSE : DEAD

Allowing the use of agricultural lands as sites for recreational activities

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

EHB 2140: SUPPORT

Reaffirms role of Conservation Commission

EHB 2140 was proposed to counter the Governor's

budget proposal that would have cut the Commission's budget and moved it under the Department of Agriculture. The Senate Agriculture Committee supported the bill and it is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Both **SHB 1466** and **SSB 5079**, the Environmental Education Partnership Fund bills, are in their respective rules committees and are expected to move for floor votes next week. We are very pleased with all the support we've received from both the House and Senate on this bill.

WILDLIFE AND NATURE TOURISM

2SHB 1973: SUPPORT

Promoting Tourism... including Nature Tourism

Last week, Audubon member Jan McMillan from Westport testified in favor of this bill in front of the Senate Trade and Economic Development Committee. Jan's eloquent testimony reinforced the need to support nature-based tourism and related business. The bill is now in the Senate Rules Committee and will go to the floor for a vote.

SB 5011: SUPPORT

Promoting Wildlife Viewing

This bill directs WDFW and CTED to host a conference on promoting wildlife viewing tourism. It was amended in the House Fisheries, Ecology and Parks Committee to remove a \$45,000 budget to pay for the conference. The bill passed out of committee and is in House Rules. Audubon hopes this bill will be moved to the floor for a vote. We are anxious to work with WDFW and CTED on the conference.





SB 5204: SUPPORT

Providing Opportunities for Wildlife Viewing

This bill establishes a revenue source for WDFW to develop a Watchable Wildlife Program with other government agencies and non-profit organizations. WDFW is authorized to sell watchable wildlife decals to raise funds for this program. The House Fisheries, Ecology and Parks Committee supported this bill and it is now in the House Rules Committee.



SB 5006: SUPPORT

Allowing Non-Consumptive Wildlife Activities on Public Land

This bill allows watchable wildlife and birder-types to go onto public lands that were once restricted for fishing or hunting only. The House Agriculture Committee Chairwoman, Rep. Kelli Linville, passed the bill out of her committee and it is now in House Rules.

SB 5179: OPPOSE

Relating to body-gripping traps

The House Fisheries, Ecology and Parks Committee still has not made a decision on this bill. They have one more meeting, Friday April 4 at 1:30 pm in which they can vote on the bill. Stay tuned!

SSB 1418: OK

Skagit Valley Farmlands and Migratory Birds

Senator Swecker held a public hearing on this bill in the Senate Agriculture Committee. He has also offered amendments that remove a provision changing HPAs on agricultural lands designated under the Growth Management Act. Audubon agrees with this amendment. The bill is up for a vote in the Committee on Friday, April 4. Watch for the next BEV or call our Olympia office for the final committee vote.

PARKS AND FOREST LANDS

SHB 1698: SUPPORT

Distribution and use of funds for off-road vehicle and non-highway road recreational activities (NOVA)

This bill was amended in the Senate committee into a "study bill". There was still too much controversy about how to split up the "gas tax" between off-road vehicle users, hikers, equestrians and other "non-highway" folks. It is now in Senate Rules Committee. Audubon can support the study bill.

SB 5235: OPPOSE

Concerning environmental impact statements on certain state trust lands

This bill exempts state trust lands timber sales from SEPA for Class I, II, and III forest practices. It will be heard in the Agriculture Committee on Friday April 4. For an update on its status, call our Olympia office 360-786-8020 x 208.

NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Both Senate and House members will be on the floor voting for bills from the opposite chamber. Stay tuned to any email action alerts from Heath Packard, Audubon's Field Director. We may need you to contact your legislators once the bills are moving on the floor.

Many thanks for your continued support!





Clip and Save This Info For Future Reference!!!.....

How to Contact Your Legislator

Find your district and your elected's contact info online at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov>

Washington State Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000

If you wish to send mail to a member of the **House**,
address it as follows:

Representative's Name
PO Box 40600
Olympia WA 98504-0600

For the **Senate**, address as follows:

Senator's Name
PO Box 404[Leg. Dist.]
Olympia WA 98504-04[Leg. Dist.]

(For example - 43rd Leg. Dist.: PO Box 40443, Olympia WA 98504-0443)

Olympia Office Location Key:

JAC John A. Cherberg Bldg. **JLOB** John L. O'Brien Bldg. **INB** Irv Newhouse Bldg. **LEG** Legislative Bldg.

- § Always include your name and address and those of the official on all mail and E-mail communications.
- § Limit faxes to three pages and always include the name of the legislative recipient on the cover sheet.

To contact your legislator by email, use the following formula:

First 8 letters of the last name, underscore, first 2 letters of the first name followed by @leg.wa.gov
(For example, **Sen.** Bill Finkbeiner: finkbein_bi@leg.wa.gov or **Rep.** Pat Lantz: lantz_pa@leg.wa.gov)

Audubon Washington is an Affiliate Member of
Visit <http://www.earthshare.org> to learn more!



Audubon WASHINGTON

P.O. BOX 462
OLYMPIA, WA 98507
(360)786-8020

Mission of the National Audubon Society

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems,
focusing on birds, other wildlife,
and their habitats for the benefit of
humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Non-profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Olympia, WA
Permit # 86