



Audubon | WASHINGTON

2021 Weekly Legislative Update

It was a slower week for our top priorities as the legislature scrambled to hear a wide variety of bills before the policy committee cutoff deadline on February 15th. After this date, any legislation that hasn't passed out of its committee of origin (and isn't necessary to implement the budget) will be dead for this session. Thankfully, our top two climate priorities have already passed out of their committees of origin and are still very much alive.

We'll need your voice and many others over the next few months as we strive to ensure the legislature passes a strong conservation budget that prioritizes climate, Puget Sound restoration, and Sagebrush recovery. Audubon in Washington has long played a critical role in passing key climate and conservation policies -- let's keep pushing in 2021!

Our weekly legislative updates will provide you with a quick reference on where our state legislative priorities (and other bills we're tracking) are in the process and how you can take action to help advance policies that protect and enhance bird habitat while also combating climate change.

[If you enjoy these weekly updates, please consider donating to support our work.](#)

Note: we've broken the following table into "top priorities," "key priorities," and "other legislation we're tracking." Legislation we're tracking does not imply we're advocating for or against the policy, unless otherwise specified.

Policy Priority	Latest Update
TOP PRIORITIES	
<p>Clean Fuel Standard A proven technology-neutral approach to reducing emissions from transportation fuels. Creates a market that accelerates the transition to alternative energy sources such as sustainable biofuels and electricity at minimal cost.</p> <p>Legislation: HB 1091</p>	<p>Clean Fuels had a hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations today (Thursday, February 4th) and may be passed onto the floor in the coming weeks. The momentum behind clean fuels is exciting and has advocates feeling more optimistic than in years past.</p>
<p>Growth Management and Climate Change</p>	<p>This legislation was voted out of the House</p>

<p>Updates our state’s growth management act to include climate change as a planning element. If passed, would fund a requirement that counties in Washington plan for emissions reductions and climate resilience.</p> <p>Legislation: HB 1099</p>	<p>Environment and Energy Committee on an 8-5 vote.</p> <p>It’s been referred to the House Committee on Appropriations but has not been scheduled for a hearing.</p>
<p>Conservation in the Operating Budget</p> <p>During the last recession we saw the harsh consequences of cutting conservation spending in the midst of tight budgets. Just last year we finally corrected some of the long-term impacts of austerity in the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) budget. This year we must ensure that DFW is able to carry out it’s important role in conserving and restoring habitat across the state. We’ll also be tracking a number of key budget provisos that support habitat restoration and long-term planning in the shrub-steppe, which was devastated by fire in 2020.</p>	<p>We’ve signaled our support for robust conservation investments in the operating budget. Detailed conversations about the budget come later in the session, when it becomes clear which policies that are moving forward have a fiscal impact.</p> <p>We’re in conversation with partners about budget funding for post-fire ecosystem recovery in the Washington’s sagelands. We’re also poised to submit budget language to revive last year’s funding for least-conflict solar siting in the Columbia Basin.</p>
<p>Conservation in the Capital Budget</p> <p>The capital budget is used to make long-term infrastructure investments in Washington. There’s no more important infrastructure than the habitat that birds and people call home. We’re calling for large, stimulative investments in grant programs that fund habitat protection and restoration while also promoting outdoor recreation opportunities. Specifically, we’re supporting full funding for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund, and Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program.</p>	<p>Similar to the operating budget, we’ve signaled our support for these important capital budget programs, but key conversations about funding levels have not yet begun. We’ll be advocating for full funding of these program budgets, which is significantly more (in some cases) than was in the Governor’s budget.</p>

OTHER KEY PRIORITIES

<p>HEAL Act</p> <p>The important work of rectifying historical injustice must be incorporated into the day-to-day work of our state agencies. This year’s HEAL Act is the result of an inclusive</p>	<p>The executive session in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology for HEAL was delayed until</p>
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<p>environmental justice task force that recommended a number of ways to accomplish this goal.</p> <p>Legislation: SB 5141</p>	<p>February 9th but the bill is expected to pass and move onto next steps.</p>
<p>GMA Salmon Recovery Element</p> <p>The fate of our state’s dwindling salmon population is closely tied to that of a number of bird species that depend on the same habitats. Incorporating salmon recovery into the GMA helps ensure that local governments are considering ecological recovery needs into their comprehensive planning efforts.</p> <p>Legislation: HB 1117</p>	<p>Although delayed, this legislation had a public hearing today in the House Environment and Energy Committee. It’s scheduled for an executive session (vote) on Thursday, February 4th.</p>
<p>Shoreline Armoring</p> <p>Hardened shoreline armoring in the Puget Sound can negatively impact birds by threatening the forage fish they depend on. This legislation promotes softer and more natural shoreline armoring, requiring landowners to consider alternatives that restore ecosystem function and recover threatened and endangered species.</p> <p>Legislation: SB 5273</p>	<p>This legislation had a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks and is scheduled for an executive session (vote) in the same committee on Thursday February 4.</p>

OTHER LEGISLATION WE’RE TRACKING

<p><i>Climate Commitment Act</i></p> <p>This legislation sets a cap on greenhouse gas emissions in Washington and directs the Department of Ecology to set up a market for allowances that the state’s largest emitters must purchase. Revenues from the purchase of allowances would be directed towards investments in decarbonization and climate resilience.</p>	<p>This legislation had a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on Tuesday, January 19th.</p> <p>No executive session has been scheduled.</p>
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<p><i>We're provided a number of important changes to this legislation to enhance environmental justice. We're also continuing to promote engagement among lawmakers to find common ground on raising important revenue through carbon pricing.</i></p> <p>Legislation: SB 5126</p>	
<p>Washington STRONG</p> <p>This legislation imposes a tax on carbon pollution in Washington State and issues green bonds to front-load investments from the carbon revenues.</p> <p><i>Once scheduled for a public hearing we'll be signing in support of this legislation while continuing to encourage legislators to converge around a single vehicle for carbon pricing in 2021.</i></p> <p>Legislation: SB 5373</p>	<p>This legislation was introduced this week and has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing.</p>
<p>Funding Wildfire prevention</p> <p>This legislation would fund the implementation of the Department of Natural Resource's 20-year forest health strategic plan. No specific funding source has been identified as yet, but a number of our partners in the environmental community have identified this legislation as a priority.</p> <p>Legislation: HB 1168</p>	<p>This legislation passed out of the House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources on a 9-3 vote and had been referred to the House Committee on Appropriations.</p>
<p>Waste Reduction</p> <p>This legislation reduces plastic waste by establishing a minimum for recycled content in plastic beverage containers and prohibiting certain polystyrene products.</p> <p>Legislation: SB 5022</p>	<p>This legislation passed out of the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology by a 7-6 vote and has been referred to the Ways and Means Committee.</p>

<p><i>Evergreen Communities</i></p> <p>This legislation directs the Department of Natural Resources to analyze and provide technical assistance for improved urban and community forestry in Washington State.</p> <p>Legislation: HB 1216</p>	<p>This legislation passed out of the House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources but has not yet been referred to the next committee.</p>
<p><i>Solar Siting and Agriculture</i></p> <p>This legislation removes solar on agricultural land of long term significance from eligibility for expedited siting at the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council.</p> <p><i>We signed in as “other” on this legislation and are working with stakeholders to revive the least-conflict solar siting proviso from last year, which we think is a better approach to improving solar siting practices.</i></p> <p>Legislation: SB 5206</p>	<p>This legislation had a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on Wednesday, January 27.</p>
<p><i>Amending the Expedited Process for Clean Energy Siting</i></p> <p>This bill updates the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) process for expedited siting of clean energy projects, incorporating a least-conflict priority process and a science-based list of mitigation options for specific project types and geographies.</p> <p>Legislation: SB 5415</p>	<p>This legislation has been scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on Tuesday, February 9th at 10:30 AM</p>