

WEEK of Monday, January 25, 2010

Environmental Community

# Hot List for the STATE HOUSE

For the eighth year in a row, the environmental community will be sending legislators and key stakeholders its weekly Environmental Community “Hot List” detailing positions on no more than ten of the highest priority issues for the upcoming week. Separate Hot Lists will be prepared for the House and Senate and distributed each Monday via email and in hard copy to your office. At the end of the document, you will find a list of environmental community organizations that contributed to the Hot List. We hope you find this communication helpful. Please feel free to contact me at [clifford@wcvoters.org](mailto:clifford@wcvoters.org) or 206-369-2235, if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Clifford R. Traisman, State Lobbyist, Washington Conservation Voters & Washington Environmental Council

## POSSIBLE HOUSE FLOOR ACTION

### 2SHB 1165: Providing safe collection and disposal of unwanted drugs from residential sources.

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

- Drug producers will provide and pay for program to collect unneeded medicines including controlled substances such as narcotics. Producers can partner with law enforcement, which has legal authority to collect controlled substances.
- We can and should dispose of waste medicines properly to reduce environmental contamination. The collected medicines will not contaminate water, cause accidental poisonings, or be used illicitly by a teenager.

### 2SHB 1180: Regarding the use of bisphenol A. (a.k.a. The Safe Baby Bottle Act)

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

- The Safe Baby Bottle bill protects children's health by banning the toxic chemical—bisphenol A (BPA)—in baby bottles, sippy cups, sports water bottles, and other food and beverage containers intended for children 3 and under.
- The Food and Drug Administration recently reversed its opinion on the safety of BPA and is now concerned about the hormone disrupting chemical's use in baby bottles. In its new opinion on BPA, the agency cited the potential for effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children among the reason for their concern.



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION

### HB 2541: Maintaining a base of forest lands that may be used for commercial forestry.

Agriculture and Natural Resources: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

- This legislation makes it difficult for the Forest Practices Board to protect public resources such as clean water by efficiently making and updating rules governing logging in Washington. It requires the Board to propose and fund incentives for voluntary measures before it can adopt any new rules, as well as applying other hurdles to efficient rule-making.
- The legislatively-approved Forests and Fish rules require that proposed rule changes come from a multi-stakeholder process that includes the timber industry before they are brought to the Board. This bill is an end-run around that legislatively-directed stakeholder process.

### HB 2559: Water quality trading.

Agriculture and Natural Resources: Possible Executive Session

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

- This bill directs the state to create a program which is in conflict with both federal and state water quality laws. The program would relax pollution treatment requirements for a facility if the operator purchased “pollution credits”.

- This approach has been unsuccessful in other jurisdictions and is very costly to implement.

**HB 2604: Exempting certain diversion of surface waters for agricultural purposes from the permit process.**

**Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Possible Executive Session

**POSITION: *OPPOSE***

- This bill creates a pilot project and a new exemption in the water code (RCW 90.03) for diversions of surface water in the "tidally influenced portion of the [Skagit] river" for new agricultural uses. Instead of adding new exemptions to the law, we should be working to find balanced solutions to fix a broken water management system and avoid exacerbating conflicts between permit and permit-exempt water uses.
- The pilot project creates a dangerous precedent that may harm salmon and steelhead recovery efforts (a legal obligation under the Endangered Species Act) and degrade precious estuarine and near-shore habitat by allowing excessive withdrawals of freshwater right before the water mixes with salt water. The bill has no protections to prevent or address ecological impacts in critical habitat areas.

**HB 2853: Authorizing a local financing tool to fund energy efficiency upgrades and removing financial barriers to implementing conservation programs.**

**Technology, Energy & Communications:** Possible Executive Session

**POSITION: *SUPPORT***

- This bill unlocks the full job-creating potential of making our homes and businesses more energy efficient by allowing municipalities to set up revolving loan programs that overcome the biggest barrier to money-saving conservation projects in Washington- the lack of up-front financing. Conservation loans are paid back with energy savings through utility or property tax bills.
- The bill also allows utilities to recover investments made to make our homes and businesses more energy efficient.

**HB 2855: Providing financing options for the operations and capital needs of transit agencies.**

**Transportation:** Public hearing

**POSITION: *SUPPORT***

- Transit agencies across the state are facing drastic service cuts that will force more people to drive, increasing emissions and congestion across the state.
- This bill will enact a temporary local option vehicle license fee that will help many transit agencies from falling off a financial cliff and cutting service.

**HB 2965: Adjusting the oil spill response tax and oil spill administration tax.**

**Finance:** Public hearing

**POSITION: *SUPPORT***

- This bill calls for an increase in the oil "barrel tax" and seals tax loopholes in order to provide funding for state oil spill prevention and response programs. The tax has not been adjusted in almost 20 years and the state program is now running a major deficit, compromising our ability to both prevent and respond to spills.

**HB 2992: Extending the deadlines for the review and evaluation of comprehensive land use plan and development regulations for three years.**

**Local Government & Housing:** Public hearing & Possible Executive Session

**POSITION: *SUPPORT IF AMENDED***

- HB 2992 delays the next time local governments update their land use plans for three years. These updates are where cities and counties comprehensively review and revise their 20-year growth plans to reflect future land capacity & demand, population projection, and infrastructure funding.
- The amendment protects commercially significant farm and forest land from being converted to other uses during this 3 year delay. Paving over resource land is difficult if not impossible to undo; local governments should protect these non-urban lands from conversion until they are able to comprehensively review their land use plans.

**HB 3034: Modifying the energy independence act.**

**Technology, Energy & Communications:** Public hearing & Possible Executive Session

**POSITION: *CONCERNS***

- The bill amends I-937, the citizens' Clean Energy Initiative, passed by the voters in 2006.
- This bill is a result of negotiations during the interim with utilities, industry and the environmental community.

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**Contributing Organizations**

American Rivers ▪ Audubon Washington ▪ Climate Solutions ▪ Conservation Northwest ▪ Earth Ministry ▪ Environment Washington  
Fuse ▪ Futurewise ▪ Heart of America Northwest ▪ Lands Council ▪ League of Women Voters of Washington ▪ Lutheran Public Policy  
Office National Wildlife Federation ▪ Nature Conservancy ▪ NW Energy Coalition ▪ People for Puget Sound ▪ Sierra Club ▪ Surfrider  
Foundation ▪ Transportation Choices Coalition ▪ Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation ▪ Washington Conservation Voters  
Washington Environmental Council ▪ WashPIRG ▪ Washington Toxics Coalition ▪ Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition