



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE

1111 Washington Street SE  
PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

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**TOPIC 3: 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

**Prepared and Presented By:** Jim Fox

**Approved by the Director:** 

**Proposed Action:** Briefing

The 2007 legislative session began on January 8<sup>th</sup> and ended on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. A number of bills were introduced that had the potential to affect IAC and other state and local agencies involved in outdoor recreation and habitat preservation. These bills are summarized below.

**New Name for IAC**

The Legislature approved HB1813, IAC's request for a new name, and the bill was signed by the Governor on April 30<sup>th</sup>. The IAC will become the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) on July 1.

**Acquisition and Disposal of State Habitat and Recreation Land**

SSB5236 implements the recommendations in IAC's *Coordinated Strategy for Habitat and Recreation Land Acquisition* (the "SB6242 report") submitted to the Legislature in 2005. The bill creates a Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group to coordinate planning for habitat and recreation land acquisition and disposal by WDFW, Parks and DNR; centralizing land acquisition data; and monitoring the success of acquisitions. The bill passed the Legislature and was signed by the Governor on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**New Boating Activities Program**

The Recreational Boating Association of Washington, Northwest Marine Trades Association, and the Boating Issues Study Group developed legislation to provide funding for new boating programs. As originally introduced, HB1651 would have transferred the excise tax paid by boat owners to a new Boating Activities Account at IAC. Currently the tax, about \$35M a biennium, goes to the general fund.



SHB1651 passed without funding from the excise tax. However, IAC's operating budget includes a \$2M general fund appropriation to the account. This provides funding for IAC to conduct a boating needs assessment, with 80% of the remaining funds transferred to State Parks for boating safety, education and law enforcement programs and 20% to be used by IAC, with the advice of a boating advisory committee, for grants for boating activities and facilities.

### **Funding For State and Local Parks**

A number of bills were introduced that would have provided additional funding for state and local parks. Only SHB2275 passed. The rest are listed here to illustrate the high level of interest for supporting Washington's parks.

- SHB2275 allows people registering motor vehicles to donate \$5 to state parks. This bill passed the Legislature and was signed by the Governor.
- HB1361 would have diverted 3% of the state real estate excise tax (REET), about \$15M, to WWRP.
- HB1768 would have authorized the use of local real estate excise tax for maintenance of parks.
- HB1770 would have authorized a referendum for a \$250M bond issue. Half of the funds would go to State Parks and half to IAC for local parks.
- HB2205 would have added an additional \$5 fee to motor vehicle registration, to be used for State Parks. Registrants would be able to opt out.
- HB2401 would have imposed a \$50/day fee on members of professional sports teams playing in publicly-financed facilities. Revenues would have been deposited into the YAF Account.
- SB5003 would have created the Centennial 2013 Account at State Parks and appropriated \$165M for Centennial 2013 projects;
- SB5217 would have increased the Conservation Futures Tax to 12.5 cents per thousand and allowed for a portion of the increase to be used for park maintenance and operation.
- SB5531 would have allowed up to 25% of local government REET to be used for park M&O.
- SB6074 would have also allowed local REET to be used for park M&O.

### **NOVA and ORVs**

In HB1448, the administrative funds collected by the Department of Licensing for administering ORV stickers would have been reduced from a maximum of 18% of the fees to a maximum of 5% or \$100,000, whichever is lower. This would have increased the amount of funding available for IAC NOVA grants by about \$500,000. The bill died.

HB1434 and its companion, SB5544, addressed noise from ORVs. These bills were the result of the study on ORV noise commissioned by IAC as a result of 2006 legislation. The bills addressed noise limits, enforcement, and obligation for attorney fees. Both bills died.

### **Puget Sound Partnership**

ESSB5372 dissolves the Puget Sound Action Team (which is currently part of the Governor's office) and creates a new state agency, the Puget Sound Partnership. The Partnership, under the guidance of a Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Puget Sound Science Panel, will develop an action agenda for restoring Puget Sound health. The bill requires the IAC to give preference in the ALEA and WWRP grant programs to projects from sponsors designated by the Partnership as "Puget Sound Partners." The Governor signed the bill on May 7.

### **Senate Confirmations of IAC Members**

All of the IAC citizen members were up for Senate Confirmation. The Senate Natural Resources, Ocean and Recreation Committee did not schedule confirmation hearings for IAC but did forward the confirmation of Val Ogden and Jeff Parsons (who had been in front of the committee previously) to the full Senate, where they were confirmed on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Other**

SB5224, as originally introduced, would have moved the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) to IAC. The Senate amended the bill to keep the GSRO in the Governor's office, where members believed the office would be more effective in carrying out its various functions.

### **Capital Budget**

The Capital Budget passed by the Legislature contains \$240M in new state and federal money for IAC and SRFB grant programs, including:

- \$100M for WWRP
- \$18M in state funds and \$42M in federal funds for SRFB
- \$40.75M in state funds for the SRFB specifically for Puget Sound restoration and acquisition projects

### **Operating Budget**

The Operating Budget did not include IAC's requested \$50,000 for a boating needs assessment. However, the budget did provide \$2M for the new Boating Activities Program, which will fund a similar assessment.

Details of IAC's capital and operating budgets will be provided in a separate memo.