



## IIABW's 2024 Legislative Session Wrap-Up

On March 7, the Washington State Legislature completed its 60-day session by approving supplemental budgets for general government operating, transportation and capital construction spending, and by passing a controversial Democratic priority bill targeting carbon reduction.

Democrats most successful effort was in environmental policy, passing legislation that deregulates Puget Sound Energy and begins the process of ending natural gas service in residential, commercial, and industrial uses beginning in 2030. But their other three high-profile bills failed:

- Established rent control requirements.
- Created strict regulatory oversight of hospital mergers and acquisitions driven by concerns those hospitals with religious beliefs around abortion, end-of-life, and gender-affirming care could become the only hospital presence in a community.
- Provided striking workers with unemployment insurance benefits.

### IIABW Top Priorities

#### **PASSED: Extending the Timeframes of Cancellation and Non-Renewal Notices – [SB 5798](#)**

Legislation passed that extends the timeframes in which an insurer must provide written notice to an insured for cancellation or non-renewal of a policy from 45 to 60 days. This extended timeframe applies to P & C policies, except for auto, medical malpractice, and fire policies. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Patty Kuderer (Democrat – Bellevue) who is running for Insurance Commissioner. IIABW strongly supported the bill.

#### **DIED: Firearm Insurance Requirements & Producer Obligations – [SB 5963](#)**

Legislation died that would have mandated all firearm owners in Washington to obtain and maintain a residential dwelling policy and/or insurance policy that covers losses and damages resulting from the accidental discharge of a firearm. The legislation also mandated that firearm owners must keep written proof of insurance in the location where the firearm is stored. The bill would have required producers to inform customers of this insurance requirement. The bill was also sponsored by Sen. Patty Kuderer. IIABW was against the bill.

#### **DIED: Wildfire Mitigation Workgroup Focusing on Wildfire Insurance Issues – [HB 2330](#)**

Legislation died that proposed to establish a workgroup to address insurance issues related to wildfire risks. HB 2330 passed from the House but did not come before the Senate for a final vote. The work group was tasked with making recommendations for development and alignment of:

- Wildfire property mitigation standards.
- Data sharing between state agencies and the insurance industry.
- Increased transparency with consumers through consumer disclosures for insurance non-renewals specific to wildfire risks.

IIABW was strongly in favor of the bill.

## **State Budgets**

The final 2023-2025 supplemental budget is \$72 billion, a \$2 billion increase from the two-year budget passed last session. This budget included no general or targeted tax increases.

The supplemental transportation budget increased \$1 billion from the 2023-2025 budget. Combined with other funding options available to budget writers, about \$900 million was reappropriated for capital spending on existing projects, including the Hwy. 520 west-bound bridge replacement and the Hwy. 167 corridor.

The supplemental capital construction budget had \$1.3 billion in available bonding capacity. Lawmakers allocated most of these funds toward projects linked to the Climate Commitment Act (\$688 million) and public school construction (\$308 million).

## **Ballot Initiatives**

Driven by the efforts of a major Republican donor, six initiatives to the legislature were successfully certified by the state. Five of the initiatives took direct aim at policies that have been central to the Democrats' legislative agenda during the past several sessions.

Lawmakers are sending three initiatives directly to the ballot. Democratic-aligned interests will run campaigns to defeat each initiative – repealing the carbon reduction cap-and-trade marketplace, repealing the state's 7% capital gains tax, and giving people an opt-out provision for participation in the state's long-term care insurance program.

Legislators approved three of the initiatives – reinstating law enforcement vehicular pursuits, maintaining parental rights in public education, and banning local governments from enacting income taxes for the next two years.

## **Legislator Retirements**

Announcements by elected officials that they are leaving legislative service is a common occurrence at the end of a session. The most significant announcement came from the top-tier of legislative leadership - Senate Democratic Majority Leader Andy Billig said he is not seeking re-election.

Other announced departures are:

- Republican Rep. Kelly Chambers, who is running for Pierce County Executive
- Former Democrat Speaker of the House Frank Chopp, retiring
- Democrat Sam Hunt, retiring
- Republican Rep. Spencer Hutchins, leaving to run his business
- Democrat Sen. Karen Keiser, retiring
- Former House GOP Deputy Leader Joel Kretz, retiring
- Republican Rep. Jacquelin Maycumber, who is running for Congress due to U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers' decision to not seek re-election
- Democrat Sen. Mark Mullet, who is running for Governor
- Former House GOP Leader JT Wilcox, retiring
- Republican Sen. Lynda Wilson, retiring
- Democrat Sen. Kevin Van De Wege, who is running for Commissioner of Public Lands