



Snohomish County Legislative Report

February 3, 2024

SESSION CUTOFF CALENDAR

January 31, 2024	Policy Committee Deadline
February 5, 2024	Fiscal Committee Deadline
February 13, 2024	Chamber-of-Origin Deadline
February 21, 2024	Opposite Chamber Policy Committee Deadline
February 26, 2024	Opposite Chamber Fiscal Committee Deadline
March 1, 2024	Opposite Chamber Deadline
March 7, 2024	Session adjourns - Sine Die

Weekly Overview

Week 4 saw a flurry of committee activity before Wednesday’s policy committee cutoff. With the first fiscal committee cutoff approaching on Monday, February 5, fiscal committees will be hearing and passing bills through the weekend. After Monday, only bills from the opposite chamber will be considered for committee hearings, with the exception being if a bill is “necessary to implement the budget” and therefore not subject to cutoff dates.

Following certification last week, the six initiatives to the Legislature featured heavily in discussions by both [Democrats](#) and [Republicans](#) during their weekly media availability sessions. Republican members reiterated their belief that the initiatives must have a committee hearing during this session, while Democrats focused on the impact that passage of the initiatives would have on the State’s budgets.

Meanwhile, House and Senate budget writers are working to complete the first draft of their proposed Supplemental Capital, Operating, and Transportation budgets. The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council will release its updated

revenue forecast on February 14. The forecast helps inform the Legislature's budget development and influences priorities and appropriations of state revenues. The House and Senate will release proposals for the Capital, Operating, and Transportation budgets sometime the week of February 19.

Legislative Issues

Public Safety

County Emergency Management Plans: [SB 6164](#), sponsored by Senator Keith Wagoner (R-39th LD), requires local organizations that produce a local comprehensive emergency management plan to include a communication notification plan for citizens during a hazardous materials spill or release. The Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee passed a substitute bill on January 30. The substitute requires a local comprehensive emergency management plan to include at least one public meeting to inform the public about the spill or release. The substitute also outlines the public meeting requirements. This week, the bill was pulled from the Senate Rules Committee to be placed on the floor calendar for chamber-wide debate. We've been hearing concerns from counties about the substitute version, which requires a public meeting for each incident with no funding source identified. County Emergency Management staff provided GTH and the legislative team feedback on the bill, including amendment suggestions if the County wishes to weigh in.

Taxing Authority to Fund Criminal Justice: [HB 2211](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Stearns (D-47th LD), and its companion [SB 6076](#), sponsored by Senator Karen Keiser (D- 33rd LD) grants councilmanic taxing authority for the existing public safety sales tax and changes maximum tax rate that cities may enact. Until January 1, 2027, a county can impose a criminal justice sales and use tax of up to .03% councilmanically. A city in a county that has not imposed the full rate of the sales tax by July 1, 2024, and until January 1, 2027, can legislatively impose the remainder of the tax to the full rate. If the first tax is imposed by ordinance, all the revenue from the tax must be used for criminal justice purposes. The bill contains flexible supplant language that stipulates the total amount of funding put towards criminal justice purposes must be higher after the imposition of the tax. The bill also adds co-responder and diversion treatment programs to the definition of "criminal justice."

The Senate Ways & Means Committee received public comments on February 1. The testimony was mostly in support of the bill. There were a few testifiers in opposition due to the councilmanic authority granted in the bill. [Councilmember Megan Dunn](#) testified in support of the bill, focusing on the need for additional revenue sources to ensure the County's budget is made whole. The House bill did not pass out of policy committee and will no longer be considered.

Basic Law Enforcement Academy: [SB 6301](#), sponsored by Senator John Lovick (D-44th LD), and companion [HB 2475](#), sponsored by Representative Debra Lekanoff (D-40th LD), allows the Criminal Justice Training Commission to accept donated money or properties to fund the Basic Law Enforcement Academy. The Senate Ways & Means

Committee heard public testimony for the bill on February 1. There was no testimony in opposition. The Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission testified in support. They expressed support for the bill because it will help reduce the current six-month wait time for newly hired officers to receive training. The Senate bill must move out of Ways and Means by February 5 to continue to be considered. The House version of the bill did not receive a hearing and will no longer be under consideration this session.

Courts

Office of Public Defense: [HB 1911](#), sponsored by Representative Jamila Taylor (D-30th LD), amends the statute prohibiting the Office of Public Defense from providing direct representation of clients by allowing managing and supervising attorneys within the Office of Public Defense to provide limited, short-term coverage of initial client consultations, if contracted counsel is not available to provide the consultation services. The bill also allows OPD to coordinate with law schools to place law clerks, externs, and interns with OPD contracted counsel, and allows OPD to provide pro bono legal services. The House version of the bill has been pulled from the House Rules Committee to be debated on the floor. The Senate companion, [SB 5914](#), did not receive a public hearing or pass out of a policy committee and will no longer be under consideration this session.

Environment

Solid Waste: [HB 2049](#), sponsored by Representative Liz Berry (D-36th LD) and its companion [SB 6005](#), sponsored by Senator Liz Lovelett (D-40th LD), relates to improving solid waste management outcomes to help achieve Washington's 50% recycling goal. This bill requires producers of certain paper products and packaging to participate in and fund the operations of a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) to collect and manage covered products from consumers. The bill also requires additional types of plastic products to meet minimum postconsumer recycled content (PCRC) requirements. It moves the responsibility to the PRO for the registration and reporting of covered products that are also subject to PCRC requirements. The House Environment & Energy Committee passed a substitute version of their bill on January 18. The House Appropriations Committee heard public testimony for the substitute bill on February 1. Testifiers in support highlighted that this bill would increase recycling access across the state, while people in opposition believe it will raise the cost of grocery items. The House version of the bill is scheduled for a vote on February 3. The Senate version of the bill did not advance out of policy committee before the first cutoff and is no longer under consideration.

Wildland Urban Interface Fix: [SB 6120](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Van De Wege (D- 24th LD), is a "fix" to concerns with past legislation by making changes to the Wildland Urban Interface Code to make necessary fire safety updates in the state building code standards. The previous bill required completion of a statewide map of the wildland urban interface areas. The resulting map was overapplied and would have required restrictive fire safety building code measures in many unintended areas of the

state, not just those at highest risk of wildfire. This bill requires a revised map of areas at greatest risk of wildland fire, instead of the wildland urban interface (which applies much more broadly). The bill also allows counties, cities, and towns to complete their own map of areas at greatest risk of wildfire in applying these fire safety codes, so long as substantially similar criteria is applied. Counties, cities, and towns issuing commercial and residential building permits in areas identified as high risk or very high risk on the map must only apply the fire safety code considerations in these areas. The bill includes an emergency clause and would take effect immediately. The bill also clarifies that the State Building Code Council may not adopt more restrictive fire safety requirements than what is included in statute. The State Government and Elections Committee unanimously passed the bill on January 30, and has been referred to the Rules Committee.

No Longer Under Consideration

Small Engines: [HB 2051](#), sponsored by Representative Amy Walen (D-48th LD), relates to reducing emissions from small off-road engines, and gas powered outdoor power equipment. Pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act, the legislation is modeled after the California small off-road engine and equipment standards. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of policy committee before the first cutoff.

Salmon Recovery/Critical Area Planning: [SB 6143](#), sponsored by Senator Jesse Salomon (D- 32nd LD), would require the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to adopt conservation and restoration guidelines for counties and cities to preserve and enhance fish recovery. Counties and cities must then adopt these guidelines into their critical areas policies and development regulations at their next scheduled comprehensive plan update. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of policy committee during the 2024 session.

GMA/Planning

Urban Growth Areas: [SB 5834](#), sponsored by Senator Short (R-7th LD) relates to urban growth areas (UGAs). This bill adds a new section to the UGA that if during a county's annual review, it is determined that a revision to the UGA is not required for the succeeding 20-year period but determines that patterns of development have created pressure in areas that exceed developable lands within the UGA, the UGA may be revised to accommodate patterns of development and future development. A substitute version of the bill moved out of policy committee adding several sideboards to revisions around critical areas. This week, the bil was pulled out of the Senate Rules Committee to be considered for debate.

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units Outside UGA: [SB 6029](#), sponsored by Senator John Braun (R-20th LD), and its companion [HB 2126](#), sponsored by Representative Sam Low (R- 39th LD), allows counties planning under the Growth Management Act to allow detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) outside of the urban growth area if certain development regulations are met. The Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee unanimously passed out a substitute version of the bill on

January 30. The substitute clarifies that the bill is permissive, requires a county to deny an ADU application if the primary dwelling unit was built after the date of the bill. The substitute specifies that an ADU may only be built on lots without critical areas and prohibits the extension or alteration of a primary dwelling unit's existing driveway to service the ADU. If the ADU is a short-term rental, it must be owned occupied. The Senate bill has been referred to the Rules Committee. The House bill has been pulled from the Rules Committee to be debated on the floor.

Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development: [SB 6140](#), sponsored by Senator Shelly Short (R-7th LD), provides an exemption for the square footage requirements for new or existing retail or service space within a limited area of more intensive rural development if the area is located at least 10 miles from an existing urban growth area and provides an essential rural retail service. The current version of the bill requires that an existing retail or food service space in a LAMIRD at least ten miles from a UGA must not exceed the footprint of the previously occupied space or 10,000 square feet, whichever is greater. The bill has been pulled from the Senate Rules Committee to be debated on the floor.

Timely and Balanced Use of Impact Fees: [HB 2450/SB 6285](#), sponsored by Representative Spencer Hutchins (R-26th LD) and Senator John Braun (R-20th LD), requires that impact fees may not provide more than 50% of the financing for system improvements. Local governments must expend or encumber impact fees for permissible use within five years instead of 10. Additionally, local governments must refund impact fees if it fails to expend or encumber within five years, unless they provide compelling reasons to hold it longer. The Senate Ways & Means Committee heard public testimony on the bill on February 1. Testifiers were split on the bill, with supporters testifying that will help drive down the cost for new homes. The Department of Commerce testified against the bill, saying that it weakens a tool that local jurisdictions need. County Public Works staff have provided comments on this bill to the Association of County Engineers. The bill has not been scheduled to move out of committee before fiscal cutoff. The House version of the bill is no longer under consideration this session.

No Longer Under Consideration

UGA Shared Boundary: [HB 2158](#), sponsored by Representative April Connors (R-8th LD), requires cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act to expand their urban growth area (UGA) boundaries to include parcels that have a shared boundary with the current UGA, a residential development approval, access or planned access to urban services, or are adjacent to UGA boundary roads and parcels across the road are within a UGA, have residential development approval, or have access or planned access to urban services. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of committee during the 2024 session.

Housing

Affordable Housing in Unincorporated Areas: [HB 2141](#), sponsored by Representative Brandy Donaghy (D-44th LD), changes the criteria to allow a county to designate a residential targeted area (RTA) for the purpose of offering the multifamily property tax exemption (MFTE). The RTA must be located in a county with population larger than 275,000 and removes the condition that the county include a higher education campus where at least 1,200 students live. The House Finance Committee heard public testimony on February 1. Testifiers were supportive of the bill, saying that it will be an incentive to build affordable housing in areas in need. The bill has not been scheduled to move out of committee before fiscal committee cutoff on February 5.

MFTE Program Structure: [SB 5118](#), sponsored by Senator Kuderer (D-48th LD), makes changes to the Multifamily Property Tax Exemption. The current version of the bill changes affordability requirements from 20% of units to 20% of the overall square-footage of the building. Additionally, the property tax exemption is extended to the portion of the underlying land value that contains affordable units in addition to new construction, as opposed to the current practice of only applying the exemption to the value of the new units. This exemption does not extend to rehabilitated or converted units. A tenant living in an income-restricted unit may increase their annual income up to 150% AMI without eviction or penalty at lease removal. Finally, the bill also allows all cities to utilize the program, removing the population threshold. The Senate Ways & Means Committee heard testimony in support of the bill on February 1st. The bill has not been scheduled to move out of committee by fiscal committee cutoff on February 5.

Housing Element Requirements of the GMA: [HB 2113](#), sponsored by Representative Jessica Bateman (D-22nd LD), requires GMA-planning counties and cities to submit their housing element to the Department of Commerce for a determination of compliance within 6 months after a comprehensive plan update. A city or county may not deny an affordable or moderate-income development unless Commerce has determined their housing element and development regulations are in compliance. A substitute version of the bill is advancing. The underlying bill required counties and cities to submit their housing element to Commerce for approval before they can take effect; the substitute version makes submission for approval optional, but requires cities and counties to submit housing development regulations for compliance review before housing development regulations take effect. The substitute removes the public health and safety study as a reason for cities or counties to deny an affordable housing development and adds the adoption of a low-income housing impact fee exemption as a reason that a city or county might be able to deny an affordable housing development. A city or county can be eligible for infrastructure funding until Commerce, the Growth Management Hearing Board, or a court of competent jurisdiction issues a final decision determining noncompliance. Finally, the bill clarifies that a city or county meets its comprehensive plan update timelines if the housing element and development regulations if Commerce provides its determination of compliance or noncompliance within 6 months after the comprehensive plan update is due.

The bill had a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 1. Testimony was mixed during the hearing. Supporters testified that this is an important

step to address the housing crisis. Others testified that this bill would change the GMA and delay building new housing by taking away local jurisdiction's decision-making authority and give it to Commerce. Local jurisdictions have expressed concerns around compliance being contingent on the ability of Commerce to provide timely decisions. The bill is scheduled for a vote on February 3.

Housing Data Collection: [SB 6152](#), sponsored by Senator Annette Cleveland (D-49th LD), modifies the requirements listed in the biannual report by the Washington Center for Real Estate Research. The report must include information the estimated existing housing units and existing housing needs within each county at certain income levels; each county's progress in closing the gap between estimated existing housing units within the county and existing housing needs; and each county's progress in meeting emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing needs within the county. The Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee passed a substitute version of the bill on January 30. The substitute bill adds to what the WCRER must include in their report, and it adds an additional factor to the list of factors the Public Works Board may consider when prioritizing projects. The bill has been referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee for further consideration; however, it has not been scheduled for a public hearing before fiscal committee cutoff on February 5.

State Building Code Council: [HB 2465/SB 6291](#), sponsored by Representative Alex Ramel (D- 40th LD) and Senator Lynda Wilson (R- 17th LD), is bi-partisan legislation establishing criteria and altering the process for adopting statewide amendments to the state building code. The bill requires that the State Building Code Council adopt amendments on a 3-year cycle, in line with their existing 3-year model code adoption cycle. Substantive amendments may only be made once during the update cycle and must meet one of the following criteria: necessary to preserve public health, safety, or welfare; clarifies the intent or application of the state building code; necessary for consistency with federal laws or regulations; directed by the Legislature; corrects errors or omissions; or eliminates an obsolete or conflicting regulation. The Council may not adopt amendments that differ substantially from the version of an amendment that is publicly heard. An interim code cycle may only be initiated to consider amendments that correct errors and omissions or eliminate obsolete, conflicting, or redundant regulations. Emergency amendments may be made when necessary to preserve public health, safety, or welfare, or for consistency with state or federal laws or regulations. The Council cannot act on emergency amendments at the meeting in which it is introduced. Additionally, the bill makes several changes to Council membership, organization, including clarifying that ex officio members do not count towards quorum, for purposes of calling special meetings, or voting thresholds. The bill also allows the Council to appoint technical advisory groups to review petitions for statewide amendments. Both versions of the bill were heard in their respective policy committees on January 30 and moved out of committee on January 31 with technical amendments. The Senate version of the bill has been referred to Rules.

No Longer Under Consideration

Authorizing MFTE for All Counties: [HB 2353](#), sponsored by Representative Greg Nance (D- 23rd LD), removes the existing restrictions on utilizing the MFTE program in counties, opening up eligibility to all counties. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of policy committee before the deadline.

Vehicles as Residences: [SB 5730](#), sponsored by Senator Phil Fortunato (R- 31st LD), authorizes an impound hearing to be postponed if ownership of the vehicle or authorization to use or reside in the vehicle is disputed up to 15 days, allowing the person to file the appropriate ownership paperwork. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of committee during the 2024 session.

Finance

REET Exemption: [HB 1966](#), sponsored by Representative Amy Walen (D-48th LD), exempts the value of machinery and equipment transferred with a property for calculating the real estate excise tax owed by the seller. The House Finance Committee had a public hearing for the bill on February 1. Testimony was mostly supportive, but the Department of Revenue wants definitions in the bill to be more clearly defined. The bill has not been scheduled to move out of committee before fiscal cutoff on February 5.

1% Property Tax Cap: [SB 5770](#), sponsored by Senator Jamie Pedersen (D-43rd LD) , removes the 1% cap on property tax growth and ties it to inflation and population growth, capped at 3%. It also creates a 25% state property tax exemption for low-income seniors and disabled veterans. The bill received a public hearing and has been scheduled to move out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee on February 5.

CJTC Training Reimbursement: [SB 6242](#), sponsored by Senator Mark Mullet (D- 8th LD), removes the requirement for local law enforcement agencies to reimburse the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) for 25% of training costs for officers. The bill was heard in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on January 22 and has been scheduled to move out of committee February 5.

Aerospace/Technology

Tax Preference for Jet Fuel: [HB 2410/SB 6240](#), sponsored by Representative Alex Ybarra (R-13th LD) and Senator Judy Warnick (R- 13th LD), expands the tax credit for alternative jet fuel manufacturing. The bill allows the existing tax credit, which is currently only provided to manufacturers with capacity to provide at least 20 million gallons of alternative jet fuel per year, to extend to facilities providing 500,000 gallons per year so long as they operate in distressed areas of the state. The Senate Business, Financial Services, Gaming, and Trade Committee passed the bill out on January 30 and referred it to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. Staff has responded with comments that this bill could be helpful to Paine Field if it was expanded to all fuel service operators. It has not been scheduled for a hearing in Ways and Means before fiscal cutoff on February 5.

SAF in Private Jets: [SB 6114](#), sponsored by Senator Marko Lias (D- 21st LD), requires the use of at least 10% sustainable aviation fuel for private jets operating in Washington State by July 1, 2028. The Governor, by Executive Order, may suspend all or portions of this requirement if it is determined that requirements are temporarily, technologically, or economically infeasible, or pose a significant risk to public safety. The bill is scheduled for a vote in the Senate Transportation Committee on February 5.

Aircraft Fuel Tax Exemptions: [HB 2393](#), sponsored by Representative Tom Dent (R-13th LD), establishes tax exemptions for unleaded aircraft fuel. The bill was heard in the House Transportation Committee but has not been scheduled for a vote before fiscal cutoff on February 5.

Economic Development of the Aerospace Industry: [SHB 1531](#), sponsored by Representative Tom Dent (R-13th LD), requires the Department of Commerce to appoint and maintain the Aviation and Aerospace Committee (AAC). The AAC will advise the Director of Commerce and the Secretary of Transportation on aviation and aerospace matters. The bill was heard in the House Appropriations Committee but has not been scheduled for a vote before fiscal cutoff on February 5.

No Longer Under Consideration

B&O Exemption: [SB 6243](#), sponsored by Senator Mark Mullet (D-5th LD), exempts manufacturers engaged in clean technology manufacturing from paying a B&O tax. The exemption expires January 1, 2035. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of committee during the 2024 session.

Procurement

Local Government Procurement Rules: [SB 6167](#), sponsored by Senator Bob Hasegawa (D-11th LD), increases, until July 1, 2026, the limit for contracts that require competitive bidding to \$150,000 if two or more trades are involved, or to \$75,000 if only one trade is involved. The Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee passed the bill out of the Committee on January 30, and has been referred to the Rules Committee.

Tribal Relations

Tribal Warrants: [HB 2305/SB 6146](#), sponsored by Representative Debra Lekanoff (D-40th LD) and Senator Manka Dhingra (D- 45th LD), establishes a process for state law enforcement officers to enforce tribal arrest warrants. The bill also lays out a process for state LEOs and state/local detention facilities to deliver tribal fugitives to tribal authorities. The Senate Ways & Means Committee passed the bill on February 1, and sent it to the Rules Committee. The House version of the bill is no longer in consideration after policy cutoff.

Elections

Local Elections: [HB 2250](#), sponsored by Representative Mia Gregerson (D-33rd LD), allows ranked choice voting (RCV) in elections for cities, counties, and other local jurisdictions. A RCV workgroup is also established to aid the Secretary of State's office with developing support materials for local governments who use RCV. The House State Government & Tribal Relations Committee passed a substitute version of the bill on January 31. The substitute makes several changes to the original bill. It specifies that costs incurred by a county related to hiring, training, and maintaining personnel because of implementing ranked choice voting are apportioned to the jurisdiction using ranked choice voting. It requires jurisdictions that adopt ranked choice voting to consult with their county auditor to determine an implementation date, unless a specific date is provided in a court order to use ranked choice voting under the Washington Voting Rights Act. Finally, it removes the ability of jurisdictions that adopt ranked choice voting to choose to hold multi-winner contests for multiple positions of the same name, district number, or title, rather than dealing with the positions as separate offices. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee. The Senate companion, [SB 6156](#), did not receive a hearing and will no longer be considered this session.

Election Worker Harassment: [SHB 1241](#), sponsored by Representative Mari Leavitt (D-28th LD), makes harassing an election worker a class C Felony, and allows harassed election workers to apply for the address confidentiality program. The Senate Law & Justice Committee received public comments for the bill on January 29. Supporters testified the bill helps protect election officials, as they are increasingly under harassment and assault. Due to the stresses that come from the hostility, some counties have seen a loss in election workers, and the bill would help them ensure hostility is properly addressed. Testifiers also said that election offices have been opening their doors to show voters that there is a non-partisan approach to the election process. Opponents of the bill stated this could impact one's First Amendment right to peacefully protest. Another testifier also said the bill should be expanded to include social workers who also face hostility. The Committee voted the bill out on January 30, and referred it to the Rules Committee.

Election Access: [HB 2023](#), sponsored by Representative Clyde Shavers (D-10th LD), requires counties to provide language assistance during elections when more than 2.5 percent of voting-age citizens in certain language minority groups in the county do not speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process and have not completed the fifth grade at a rate higher than the national average. The Secretary of State will determine which counties are subject to these language assistance programs. The House Appropriations Committee heard public testimony on February 1, and has scheduled a vote on the bill for February 3.

General Government

Aerial Imagery: [HB 1990](#), sponsored by Representative Cindy Ryu (D-32nd LD), relates to Washington's aerial imagery program. The Consolidated Technology Services Agency (CTSA) establishes the Aerial Imagery Program to provide local governments, state agencies, special purpose districts, and tribal government with aerial imagery

services. The bill also establishes a statewide imagery services account in the state treasury. The substitute bill has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee, but no public hearing or vote has been scheduled.

Intergovernmental Relationship Between BC/US: [HB 2000](#), sponsored by Representative Sharlett Mena (D-29th LD), and its companion, [SB 6168](#), sponsored by Senator Derek Stanford (D-1st LD), relates to the Office of International Relations and Protocol (OIRP). The OIRP's authority is expanded to create an advisory committee, designate foreign jurisdictions of strategic importance, and support state government relationships with foreign jurisdictions. The bill also creates an Interparliamentary Exchange with British Columbia. The Senate version of the bill is in the Rules Committee. The House Appropriations Committee passed a substitute on January 31. Their substitute restores the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations to 12 members. It also makes changes to the reimbursement rules.

Voter Approval for Local Government Prohibitions on Cannabis Businesses: [HB 1650](#), sponsored by Representative Sharon Wylie (D-49th LD), requires voter approval for local government prohibitions on cannabis retail businesses after July 2027 unless a majority of voters in a general election approve an ordinance to that effect. It further establishes state preemption of the regulation of cannabis retail businesses except for the authorization of voter-approved bans. The bill received a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on February 1, with the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington Association of Substance Misuse and Violence Prevention testifying against the bill. The bill is scheduled for a vote on February 3.

Access to Personnel Records: [SB 5924](#) sponsored by Senator Patty Kuderer (D-48th LD) concerns access to personal records. The bill requires an employer to furnish an employee, former employee, or their designee with the employee's personnel file at no cost within 21 calendar days of a request. It mandates an employer to furnish a former employee with a signed written statement with the effective date of discharge, whether the employer had a reason for the discharge and, if so, the reasons, within 21 calendar days of the written request. It allows an employee or former employee to bring a private action, after five days' notice, for violations of certain rights regarding personnel files, and discharge information, for equitable relief, graduated statutory damages up to \$1,000, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of each violation. The Senate Labor & Commerce Committee voted a substitute version of the bill out on January 23. The substitute bill modifies which records are included in the personal file and allows the employer to provide a copy of a personal file instead of the original. The Senate Ways & Means Committee has scheduled a public hearing on the bill for February 3.

Public Records Portal: [SB 6232](#), sponsored by Senator Jeff Wilson (R-19th LD), creates a pilot program for a public records request portal. The Senate State Government & Elections Committee heard the bill on January 23. Allied Daily Newspaper and other supporters testified that having a common portal for people to have access to public records helps modernize the system to match the technology

used today. The Committee passed a substitute version of the bill on January 26. The substitute directs JLARC to find a suitable agency to run the pilot project, and to deliver the final report on the pilot project. The Senate Ways & Means Committee had a public hearing for the bill on February 1 with no testimony.

Assisting Refugees and Immigrants: [HB 2368](#), sponsored by Representative Mia Gregerson (D-33rd LD), requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to coordinate state, federal, and local efforts to support the economic and social integration of immigrants and refugees arriving and resettling in Washington. DSHS will provide refugees with cash assistance, medical assistance, and support services. Additionally, DSHS is authorized to administer services to immigrants who don't qualify for federally funded services. The House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning Committee passed a substitute version of the bill on January 31. The substitute specifies that DSHS coordinate statewide efforts to support economic and social integration of immigrants and refugees into the state, and it expands the DSHS requirements to support basic needs of immigrants and refugees in the State. DSHS is also the lead agency for the administrative plan for refugee resettlement. Finally, it requires DSHS to coordinate with local, state, federal, and other stakeholders, and for DSHS to engage in communities impacted to determine an equitable funding distribution and contracting process. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

No Longer Under Consideration

Private Right of Action for Harm: [HB 1025](#), sponsored by Representative My-Linh Thai (D- 41st LD), would create a legal remedy under state law for individuals who are injured when a peace officer violates the state Constitution or state law. Plaintiffs may also name the officer's employer as a defendant, and employers are also independently liable if a proximate cause of the injury was the employer's failure to use reasonable care in hiring, training, supervising, or disciplining the officer under this proposal. The bill did not pass out of policy committee during the 2024 session.

Stay-to-Play: [HB 1860](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Volz (R-6th LD), prohibits entities from requiring participants to stay at certain hotels as a requirement for participation in the event. The bill did not move out of policy committee before the cutoff and will no longer be considered.

Vexatious Litigants/PRA: [HB 2307](#), sponsored by Representative Joe Schmick (R- 9th LD), is AWC and WSAC request legislation that requires public records request claimants to go through an administrative judicial review process before collecting penalties from local governments. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of policy committee before the first cutoff.

Agritourism: [SB 6219](#), sponsored by Senator Judy Warnick (R-13th LD), allows cities and counties to use innovative zoning technics for commercial uses and activities to promote visitors for agrotourism. The bill exempts agricultural buildings used for tourism purposes from additional commercial standards under the State Building Code if its only

open six months or less a year. Finally, the bill allows the Liquor and Cannabis Board to issue beer and wine licenses to an agrotourism venue. The bill received a public hearing but did not pass out of policy committee before the first cutoff.