**February 18, 2011**

**Washington Fire Chiefs Legislative Committee Report**

**Fire Chief Wayne Senter**

The following is an update of those bills and activities that relate to our priority legislation issues. To listen to testimony on our bills, go to [http://www.tvw.org](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx) type in the bill number in the find box, hit enter and then click on watch video. Click on the bill numbers in this report to go directly to bill details.

Top Five Priority Issues

* **Simple Majority Vote for EMS levies:** The state fire commissioners are taking the lead on this issue. [SB 5381](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1476&year=2011) ([1476](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1476&year=2011)) had a hearing this week. The hearing went well, with nobody signed up in opposition. There is some skepticism about the bill and some confusion about the Constitutional implications. We will continue to work with the fire commissioners on this one.
* **Barriers to install Residential Sprinklers:** The state fire chiefs are taking the lead on this with the WSAFM. [HB 1295](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1295&year=2011) ([5206](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5206&year=2011)) This bill is picking up a lot of support and is progressing nicely. [SB 5206](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5206&year=2011) was passed to Rules Committee for second reading.
* **Provide cities joining an RFA with the same taxing authority as fire districts:** The WSCFF is taking the lead on this issue; we support ([1731](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1731&year=2011)) as amended and exec’d out of Local Government and sent to Rules Committee for second reading. This bill would clarify that RFA commissioners are allowed explicitly.
* **Wildland Urban Interface Code:** The state fire chiefs are taking the lead on this issue with the WSAFM, SB [5207](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5207&year=2011) (1505) was heard in committee this week. This bill is meeting some push-back regarding local costs, effectiveness of the program and local control issues. No action was taken last week which is a bad sign.
* **No Mans Land:** No Mans Land [HB 1506](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1506&year=2011) and [SB 5373](http://www.tvw.org) give land owners options for fire protection to ensure coverage and eliminates gift of public funds. The WFC is taking the lead on this issue. We had hearings this week and testified, it went well and this issue is progressing nicely. [HB 1506](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1506&year=2011) was voted out of the General Government Appropriations & Oversight Committee. [SB 5373](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5373&year=2011) was passed to Rules Committee for second reading.

**Other related issues:**

* **Black Powder:** [HB 1066](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1066&year=2011) authorizes black powder to be: (1) Transported in a private vehicle in quantities not to exceed fifty pounds when a placard is displayed under rules adopted by the department of labor and industries; and (2) Stored in private residences in quantities not to exceed twenty pounds when stored in a secure explosives container.

 **WFC Position:** Oppose

 **Action:** Testified against proposal, commented on proposed amendment that addresses nearly all of our concerns.

 **Status:** Appears dead.

* **Fire Sprinkler Bill:** [HB 1155](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1155&year=2011) removes the fire sprinkler requirements for any type of agricultural building and removes the authority from cities and counties to enact fire sprinkler legislation on agricultural building at the local level.

**WFC Position:** Oppose

**Action:** Testified against proposal 1-18-11

**Status:** Appears dead

* **Death Benefit:** [SB 5160](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5160&year=2011) ([1450](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1450&year=2011)) provides for an increase in the on-duty death benefit for public employees and volunteer firefighters from $150,000 to $214,000. This is request legislation from the Select Committee on Pension Policy.

**WFC Position:** Support

 **Action:** Signed in favor

* **Public Records Request Reform:** There are several bills, [HB 1034](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1034&year=2011) ([SB 5025](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5025&year=2011)), [HB 1299](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1299&year=2011) ([SB 5089](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5089&year=2011)), [HB 1300](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1300&year=2011) ([SB 5088](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5088&year=2011)), and [HB 1044](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1044&year=2011) ([5049](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5237&year=2011)), that attempt to balance the need for public access to public records with reasonableness regarding agency cost for responding to these requests and other related issues. There were many bills on this subject that were heard this week. They seem to be getting support to better define reasonable behavior. [SB 5685](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5685&year=2011), specifying penalties for public records violations, was passed out of the Senate Government Operations Committee on 2/17 and is now in Rules. [HB 1899](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1899&year=2011), changing penalty amounts for public records violations, was passed out of the House State Government Committee on 2/17 and is now in Rules. [SB 5294](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5294&year=2011), regarding hours of availability of cities, towns, and special purpose districts for inspection and copying of public records, was passed out of Senate Government Operations on 2/16 and is now in Rules.

 These bills will likely undergo significant changes as they continue through the process.

 **WFC Position:** Support

 **Action:** Signed in favor

* **Volunteer License Plates:** [HB 1136](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1136&year=2011), the state fire commissioners are taking the lead on this issue. The House bill was heard was exec’d out of that committee. This bill is progressing nicely.

 **WFC Position:** Support

 **Action:** Signed in favor

* **Ballot Title Changes:** [HB 1158](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1158&year=2011) expands the number of words allowed from 75 to 85 and requires that dollar amounts be specified rather than only rates and that “new” or “renewal” be in the title.

 **WFC Position:** Oppose

 **Action:** Appears seriously wounded no hearing has taken place.

* **Fire Districts Annexations:** This issue relates to fire district annexation, [SB 5143](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5143&year=2011) ([1799](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1799&year=2011)) clarifies that fire districts are exempt from potential review by a boundary review board, when it involves a tribal area. The bill was exec’d out last week.

**WFC Position:** Monitor

**Action:** Hearing scheduled next week

* **Fire Districts Annexations:** This issue [HB 1627](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1627&year=2011) ([5491](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5491&year=2011)) allows the boundary review board to increase the size of the proposed annexation by 100%. There were several amendments to limit this increase to the intended one or two lots mentioned in testimony.

**WFC Position:** Oppose

**Action:** Passed to rules for second reading as amended

* **Public Safety Authorities:** [HB 1230](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1230&year=2011) ([5155](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5155&year=2011)) Establishes regional public safety authority planning committees to create and propose to jurisdictions a regional public safety authority plan to design, finance, and develop police service projects.

**WFC Position:** Monitor

**Action:** Hearing held

* **Presumptive coverage:** [SB 5354](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5354&year=2011) ([1445](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1445&year=2011)) would include MI and stroke as presumptive work related illnesses. The WSCFF is taking the lead on this issue. Also see [HB 1444](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1444&year=2011) ([5353](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5353&year=2011)) for survivor benefit improvements.

 **WFC Position:** Support

**Action:** SB 5354 was passed out of Senate Labor and Commerce on 2/17 and was passed out of Ways & Means on 2/18, and is now on its way to Rules.

* **Volunteer Pension:** [SB 5365](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5365&year=2011) would authorize the purchase/buy back for years of service as a volunteer firefighter. The purchase shall be made by the individual, but does voluntarily allow the district to contribute on behalf of the volunteer firefighter.

**WFC Position:** Support

**Action:** Hearing occurred in Senate Ways & Means Committee on 2/10. Signed in supporting.

* **WABO Mutual Aid:** [HB 1406](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1406&year=2011) ([5221](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5221&year=2011)) would authorize building officials, inspectors and other support personnel to assist the affected jurisdiction during the mitigation and recovery phase of an emergency. WFC has concerns about the term “emergency responder” in the bill. A revised bill that addresses most of our concerns will be dropped next week; we support this version and continue to look for a way to combine the two MA bills.

**WFC Position:** Support with concerns

**Action:** The amended bills were both passed out of Committee and are now in Rules for second reading.

* **Intrastate Mutual Aid:** [HB 1585](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1585&year=2011) ([5420](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5420&year=2011)) Establishes the intrastate mutual aid system to provide for mutual assistance in an emergency among political subdivisions and federally recognized Indian tribes that choose to participate as member jurisdictions.

**WFC Position:** Support

**Action:** Passed on to rules for second reading

* **Alternative Fuel requirements:** [HB 1141](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1141&year=2011) attempts to exempt certain provisions previously adopted on 2007. This bill has prompted a new bill ([1781](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1781&year=2011)) to exempt emergency vehicles. A Senate version of the bill has been developed and introduced by Sen. Rockefeller, [SB 5707](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5707&year=2011), but no hearing has been held.

**WFC Position:** Support 1781

**Action:** 1141 looks dead; 1781 was passed on to Rules for a second reading

* **Ambulance Utility:** [HB 1596](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1596&year=2011) ([5493](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5493&year=2011)) would require cities and towns with ambulance utilities to allocate funds to ambulance services in an amount proportionate to the percentage of the ambulance service costs to the total costs necessary to regulate, operate, and maintain the ambulance utility. Amendments that require public hearings, require 15% funding and other notice were adopted.

**WFC Position:** Monitor, with concerns, support amendment

**Action:** Both versions have been sent to Rules for a second reading

* **Budget Issues:** We are monitoring many issues that may have an impact on our members including funding for E-911, SEIC funding and 211 services.
* **Definition of a Firefighter:** We met with DRS and agreed to form a sub-committee to determine clarifications needed and if rule making is required that the work be done this year.
* **Child care facilities located in publicly-owned buildings:** [HB 1776](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1776&year=2011) would allow the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to establish a uniform set of licensing requirements for childcare facilities located in publicly-owned buildings. The effect of this would potentially be to bypass or ignore certain building and fire codes. The Chiefs testified with strong concerns about this bill at a public hearing in the Early Education Committee, as did the Fire Marshal’s office. We are working with the prime sponsor to see if we can find a way to meet the desires of the childcare facilities while not exempting them from building and fire codes. An amended version was passed out of Committee on 2/17 and had a hearing in the Education Appropriations Committee on 2/18. The bill is improved, but still needs work. We will continue to work with the prime sponsor and other interested parties as this bill continues to move.
* **Providing flexibility for school districts:** [HB 1025](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1025&year=2011) does a combination of things, but the most pertinent to us is that it states that, although school districts must develop and maintain a safe school plan that meets federal requirements for school emergency planning, the specific elements required to be in the plan, as well as other safety reporting and safety drill requirements, are removed.

Most of the testimony was in opposition to the bill. It is not currently scheduled for Executive Session, but we will continue to monitor this.

* **Modifying hospital and emergency service personnel reporting requirements to law enforcement**: [SB 5671](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5671&year=2011) would have required emergency service personnel to report to law enforcement officials whenever aid was delivered to a person suffering from blunt force trauma, a gunshot wound, a stab wound, or when death was caused by a drug overdose. We testified in opposition to these requirements and worked with the prime sponsor to improve the bill. An amended version of the bill as passed out of the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee on 2/17 and is now in Rules. The amended version deleted all references to “blunt force trauma” and now imposes only one reporting requirement on emergency service personnel: to report when responding to an incident where the patient died due to a drug overdose. We will continue monitoring this bill and will work to improve it further.