



# Washington Fire Chiefs Legislative Report

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## **2017 Legislature Review**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Session of the 2017 Legislature ended on July 20<sup>th</sup>, without the passage of a biennial Capital Budget or a bill to address the Hirst water issues. Both issues dominated the third special session, after passage of an Operating Budget just hours prior to a government shutdown on June 30<sup>th</sup>. All told, the Legislature was in session for 193 days in what was supposed to be a 105-day session. That marks the longest legislative session in the history of Washington State, besting 2015's session by roughly one week.

In addition to being the longest session in history, 2017 also marked one of the least productive sessions in modern history, with fewer than 380 bills making their way to the Governor's desk for final signature and enactment. On average, dating back to 1983, odd-number years like 2017 have seen 465 bills passing both chambers and heading to the Governor. The output this year puts the Legislature markedly below the 778 bills that typically pass during a given biennium.

The relatively few number of bills passed, coupled with the length of session, has resulted in this Legislature receiving the lowest "grades" from lobbyists in the annual Elway Poll of any Legislature in recent years. This year's average "GPA" for the Legislature came in at 1.46, equivalent to a grade of D+. The full "Report Card" from lobbyists is available if desired.

## **Primary Review**

The August 1<sup>st</sup> primary election saw relatively few surprises on the legislative side, with only a handful of special elections taking place during this off-year. The key race is for the 45<sup>th</sup> LD (Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, Sammamish) Senate seat, where Democrat Manka Dhingra received 51.5% of the vote compared to Republican Jinyoung Lee Englund's 41.4% (a third candidate with no party affiliation polled at roughly 7% and has endorsed Dhingra). If this trend line holds, Democrats will recapture the majority in the Senate for the 2018 session.

In the 31<sup>st</sup> LD (Auburn, Enumclaw), incumbent Republicans Phil Fortunato and Morgan Irwin held strong leads over their Democratic challengers for the Senate and House, respectively. Both Fortunato and Irwin received roughly 58% of the vote.

Other races in the 37<sup>th</sup> LD (Democratic Sen. Rebecca Saldana), 48<sup>th</sup> LD (Democratic Sen. Patty Kuderer and Rep. Vendana Slatter) and the 7<sup>th</sup> LD (Republican Sen. Shelly Short and Rep. Jacquelin Maycumber) all saw the incumbents hold strong leads, as expected.



**Campaign Contribution Recommendations**

The following campaign contributions have been approved for 2017 general election and early 2-2018 primary election.

**2017 Special Election**

**Senate Candidates**

Kuderer, Patty (D-48, Bellevue)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Short, Shelly (R-7, Addy)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter

**House Candidates**

Irwin, Morgan (R-31, Auburn/Enumclaw)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
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**Early 2018 Primary Contributions**

**Senate Candidates**

Nelson, Sharon (D-34, Maury Island)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Carlyle, Reuven (D-36, Seattle)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Lias, Marko (D-21, Mukilteo)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Fain, Joe (R-47, Covington/Auburn)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter

**House Candidates**

Griffey, Dan (R-35, Allyn)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Stokesbary, Drew (R-31, Auburn)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Chapman, Mike (D-24, Port Angeles)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Tharinger, Steve (D-24, Sequim)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Lovick, John (D-44, Mill Creek)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Goodman, Roger (D-45, Kirkland)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
McBride, Joan (D-48, Bellevue)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter
Peterson, Strom (D-21, Edmonds)	\$150.00 + Endorsement Letter

**Total: \$2,250.00**



### **2017-19 Capital Budget – HB 1075**

The Legislature failed to pass a Capital Budget for the first time in modern history this session. A bi-partisan budget has been agreed upon; however, unless or until the ongoing issues regarding exempt wells and water impairment and mitigation are resolved, Senate Republicans have steadfastly refused to bring the budget up for a vote, despite it passing the House 92-1. It is possible that the Legislature could be brought back in for a fourth special session to resolve this and the Hirst water issues; however, it may not be until after the certification of the November election.

The current budget proposal authorizes an arrangement to pay \$7.45 million for the Fire Training Academy Burn Building replacement, as well as another \$3 million in Fire Training Academy storm-water remediation. Other projects in the updated proposal include:

- \$1.32 million for fire communications base stations & mountain top repeaters to DNR
- \$80,000 for the Lewis County Fire District #1 Emergency Services Building & Resource Center in Onalaska
- \$252,000 for a new fire station at Lake Lawrence in Yelm
- \$448,000 for the Schilling Road fire station in Lyle
- \$525,000 for the Skagit County Public Safety Emergency Communications Center expansion and remodel in Mt. Vernon
- \$1 million for the Chelan County Emergency Operations Center in Wenatchee
- \$1.5 million for the District 5 Public Safety Center in Sultan
- \$17,000 for Fox Island catastrophic emergency preparation

### **Group Purchasing Organizations – Audit/AGO Update**

The following draft questions have been developed for submittal to the Attorney General's Office on the issue of whether Washington State law precludes the use of group purchasing organizations by governmental entities looking to purchase certain items above the \$50,000 threshold. We are looking to refine these questions and provide additional key information on GPOs prior to officially submitting the questions via Rep. Dan Griffey.

1. Under RCW 52.14.110 and 39.04 et seq, must fire districts award contracts for the purchase of any materials, supplies, service, and equipment over \$50,000 and which are unconnected to a public works project, based on the competitive sealed bid procedure for the "lowest responsive bidder," or may the district award a contract based on "best value" by utilizing a group purchasing organization to help facilitate the purchase?
2. Under RCW 52.14.110, 39.04 et seq, what circumstances may a district utilize a group purchasing organization to facilitate the purchase of materials, supplies, services, or equipment over \$50,000 in value and unconnected to a public works project?



### **Food Trucks & Fire Safety**

The Washington State Food Truck Association plans to run a bill next session to address fire safety standards for mobile food vendors. The legislation would look to incorporate the new NFPA code written for mobile cooking operations. The initial proposal would likely contain the following elements:

1. Requirement of a state-wide fire safety permit. One annual fire permit inspection that is universal (across city/county lines.) All Washington state mobile food vendors with a generator, propane, compressed natural gas, and/or fire suppression hood would be required to obtain a (state-wide) fire safety permit. To do that, food truck operators must pass a fire inspection (that could be done in any city or county); and always have a person on board the truck who has completed a biennial fire safety training class in handling and exchanging propane tanks.
2. Require a biennial fire safety training (mobile food worker fire safety card similar to the current food worker card, low cost and little time commitment).
  - Fire extinguishers must be inspected or given a "quick check" every 30 days. For most extinguishers, this is a job that you can easily do by locating the extinguishers and answering the three questions below.
    - a. Is the extinguisher in the correct location?
    - b. Is it visible and accessible?
    - c. Does the gauge or pressure indicator show the correct pressure?
  - Suggest proof of leak test every time tanks are changed/filled with either electronic leak detection device, or a soap test.
  - Pressure check for propane lines.
3. Require a standard-universal city/county inspection form/checklist for fire officials to use (so vendors know what is required of them no matter what city/county they are in.) and for 3<sup>rd</sup> party cleaning/maintenance and inspection service providers (with codes). This would encompass stream-lining event/festival inspections that require a 5-10 foot minimum distance.

### **Dept. of Revenue Request Legislation – Levy Restoration**

DOR is exploring request legislation for the 2018 session to clarify how to restore a regular property tax levy. The proposal would amend RCW 84.55.015 to clarify how a taxing district would re-establish a regular property tax levy if it had not levied the tax in a significant period of time, as follows:

- If it has been more than 6 years since a taxing district last levied a regular property tax, the restored levy would be treated like a new levy. Thus, the tax rate for the first year of the restored levy could be set at any amount up to the maximum statutory rate.
- If it has been fewer than 7 years since a taxing district last levied a regular property tax, the first restored levy is limited to the maximum allowable amount that could have been levied had the taxing district continuously levied the regular property tax.