**May 24, 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:** [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)) This bill was not successful based on 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:** [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 was successful and was signed into law on May 12, 2011.
* **RFA improvements:** ([1731](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1731&year=2011)) as well as others (1854) were successful and both have been signed into law by the Governor.
* **Wildland Urban Interface Code:** SB [5207](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5207&year=2011) (1505) This bill was not successful, as it was met some push-back regarding local costs, effectiveness of the program and local control issues. We are exploring future proposals on this issue and will be working with stakeholders in the interim to develop a plan for 2012.
* **No Mans Land:** [HB 1506](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1506&year=2011) ([SB 5373](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5373&year=2011)) This bill was successful and was signed into law by the Governor on April 29, 2011.

**Other related issues that passed or remain alive this session:**

**Public Records Request Reform:** [SB 5685](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5685&year=2011) and [HB 1899](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1899&year=2011), changing penalty amounts for public records violations. HB 1899 was successful and was signed into law by the Governor on May 5, 2011.

**Volunteer License Plates:** [HB 1136](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1136&year=2011), creating volunteer firefighter special license plates. This bill was successful and it was signed into law by the Governor on May 3, 2011.

**WABO Mutual Aid:** [HB 1406](http://www.tvw.org?bill=5493&year=2011?bill=5493&year=2011) ([5221](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5221&year=2011)) This bill, establishing a building safety mutual aid system, passed and was signed into law by the Governor on April 29, 2011.

**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)) This bill, establishing an intrastate mutual aid system, passed and was signed into law by the Governor on April 15, 2011.

**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)) This bill, concerning requirements that cities and towns with ambulance utilities allocate funds toward the total cost necessary to regulate, operate, and maintain the ambulance utility, passed and was signed into law by the Governor on April 20, 2011. It was amended to require that any reduction in general fund allocations to the ambulance utility receive public notice and hearing.

**Child care facilities located in publicly-owned buildings:** [HB 1776](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1776&year=2011) This bill passed and was signed into law on May 16. It becomes effective June 22.

**HB 1478 provides local governments with more time to meet certain statutory requirements**, including a three-year delayed implementation of biofuel standards for vehicles. This bill passed the Senate with a favorable amendment, making it applicable to all local government subdivisions and not just cities and counties. This bill was signed into law on May 16 and becomes effective June 22.

**HB 1969**, concerning the exemption of flood control zone districts that are coextensive with a county from certain limitations upon regular property tax levies, passed and was signed into law by the Governor on May 5, 2011. This bill states that for taxes levied for collection in 2012 through 2017, a flood control district in a county with a population of 775,000 or more with boundaries coextensive with a county may place up to 25 cents of the district's 50 cent levy outside the $5.90 limit to avoid prorationing. The levy for such flood control districts is still within the constitutional $10 limit. Should the $10 limit be exceeded, a flood control district will be the first levy to be prorated. Flood control zone districts with a population of less than 775,000 are moved from the second tier to the third tier of prorationing under the $5.90 limit.

**SB 5638**, concerning the exemption of flood control zone districts that are coextensive with a county from certain limitations upon regular property tax levies. This bill passed was reintroduced in the special session and passed on May 22. It has been delivered to the Governor and awaits signature. The version of the bill that passed does the following things: eliminates flood control district provisions from the bill; makes metropolitan park districts (MPDs) the first taxing district subject to prorationing under the $10.00 limit; limits the time period to 6 years in which the MPD levy can be moved into the gap; includes a contingent provision to ensure that a metropolitan park district will be prorated first if EHB 1969, relating to flood control zone districts, is enacted; and corrects unintended consequences from EHB 1969.

**Other related issues that are dead this session:**

**Black Powder:** [HB 1066](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1066&year=2011)

**Fire Sprinklers in Agricultural Structures Bill:** [HB 1155](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1155&year=2011)

**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)

**Public Records Request Reform:** [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)).

**Ballot Title Changes:** [HB 1158](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1158&year=2011)

**Fire Districts Annexations:** [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)) [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))

**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))

**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)) [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))

**Volunteer Pension:** [SB 5365](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=5365&year=2011)

**Alternative Fuel requirements:** [HB 1141](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1141&year=2011)

**Providing flexibility for school districts:** [HB 1025](http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/default.aspx?bill=1025&year=2011)

**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)

**HB 1702 obligates counties, cities, and towns to adopt deferral systems** for the collection of impact fees

**Budget Issues:**

The House and Senate reached an agreement on the workers’ compensation issue, which was the major hold-up on passage of the Operating Budget. As the AP reported, “State leaders had been pursuing the package to increase financial stability in the workers' compensation system. The largest portion of the plan includes the option of financial settlements to older workers who get injured. Labor groups opposed the idea because it could lead people to accept less benefits than they would otherwise be entitled to receive.” With this issue out of the way, the budget was passed in the waning hours of the special session.

E-911 is fully funded operating budget. Additionally, the apprenticeship program is funded at $400,000. The budget also includes a one-time allocation of $48,000 to develop the infrastructure necessary to maintain the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), to be operated by the Fire Chiefs.

The capital budget contains $100,000 for pre-design work on a new Burn Building. Another $300,000 has been allocated for repairs to the existing burn building.

LEOFF consolidation did not pass this session. HB 2097, merging plan 1 and plan 2 of the law enforcement officers' and firefighters' retirement system, was introduced but was not scheduled for public hearing. We urged legislators to review this proposal during the interim and not to rush into any decision on this important topic.

Two other bills, HB 2068 and HB 2071, received public hearing on 4/14 in the House Ways & Means Committee but failed to move. HB 2068 would set law enforcement officers' and firefighters' plan 2 contribution rates for the 2011-2013 fiscal biennium at the actuarially required rates. HB 2071 would eliminate the September 30, 2011, transfer to the local public safety account and clarifying the method of funding previously adopted benefits. We worked with the State Council and other LEOFF 2 members in opposition to these bills.