

This Week in Olympia

January 25, 2010

A Report from Chelan County PUD External Affairs

- **Week #3 of the 2010 legislative session**

The pace in Olympia continues to accelerate with committee hearings on hundreds of bills and public testimony on Governor Gregoire's proposed budget. Key to the current biennial budget is revenue collections. The latest economic report for the state predicts the recovery is underway, but progress is expected to be slow this year.

- **There are about 1,500 bills currently under consideration**

Proposed bills of interest to Chelan PUD continue to make an appearance:

1. House Bill 2536 – Requires all electric utilities to provide standard offer contracts for the purchase of electricity produced from certain renewable energy systems.
2. House Bill 2546/Senate Bill 6728 – Relating to classroom training for electrical trainees. Increases the number of classroom hours required to renew an electrical trainee certificate
3. House Bill 2602 – Establishing continuing education requirements for engineers. This bill imposes requirements for engineers that are similar to those for land surveyors.
4. House Bill 2879 – Reforming industrial insurance through privatization and competition. This bill proposes to privatize the industrial insurance system for the benefit of employers and workers through increased competition.
5. House Bill 2471 – Concerning net metering of electricity. Increases the allowable electrical generating nameplate capacity of a net metering system to two megawatts.

- **Companion bills to amend the Energy Independence Act are filed**

After months of vigorous debate, proposed changes in the law that resulted from Initiative 937 are now contained in bills before the House (House Bill 3034) and Senate (Senate Bill 6672). Bill amendments are expected to be introduced during committee hearings in both houses this week. Chelan PUD is proposing modified language for a Washington department of Commerce study of hydro used to integrate other renewable resources (wind

and solar). Furthermore, the PUD is recommending amended language for a joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee study of the environmental benefits and economic impacts of utilities purchasing renewable energy credits instead of developing new resources before they're needed.

- **Telecommunications retail authority and taxing renewable energy credit sales are debated in committee**

House Bill 2600 would extend retail telecommunications authority to utilities and rural port districts. House Bill 2417 would establish a 50% tax on selling unbundled renewable energy credits. Both bills were heard by the House Technology, Energy and Communications Committee last week. The telecommunications bill is scheduled for a committee vote this week.

- **Keeping an eye on other Chelan PUD legislative priorities**

- Recreational Use Statute amendment – The proposal to provide liability protection for injuries that may be sustained by kayakers involved in whitewater boating on the Chelan River remains in the Senate Rules Committee.
- County utility tax – House Bill 2749 would authorize utility taxes for gross electric, water and wastewater revenues generated by services in unincorporated areas.
- PUD Commissioner compensation – House Bill 2707, which would eliminate ambiguity in how PUD commissioner compensation is established, has been approved by the House Local Government & Housing Committee.

For more information

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