

2021 State Legislative Session Preview

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Overview

- Long session - 105 days
- Begins Jan. 11
- Budget year
 - Operating, Capital and Transportation
- Budget drivers: COVID response and culvert replacements
- Revenue projections for 2019-21 and 2021-23
- Still waiting on committee structures and assignments
- Fewer bills
- Virtual Session - will provide for remote testimony

What happened with the November election?

- Significant voter turnout – nearing 85% (79% - '16, 72% -'18)
- Chelan County – 86.5% voter turnout
- State legislative chamber changes include:
 - Some incumbents being ousted
 - A couple of districts flipping
 - But overall balance changed little in both chambers

Changes in Leadership

- Some committee leaders were not re-elected resulting in a reshuffling of committees
 - Rep. Hudgins was chair of Innovation, Technology, and Economic Development (telecom/broadband issues oversight)
 - Rep. Blake chaired the Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee
 - Sen. Takko chaired Senate Local Government

Legislative Majorities (Election Years)

Senate		
	Democrats	Republicans
2018	28	21
2020	29	20
Net Change	+1	-1

House of Representatives		
	Democrats	Republicans
2018	57	41
2020	58	40
Net Change	+1	-1

Top 2021 Legislative Priorities

- Dryden wastewater funding
 - Capital fund request
 - Grant program requests
 - Support for program funding
- Clean Energy Fund
 - Support for program funding
 - Ensure program supports innovation projects

Energy Issues

Sen. Carlyle and Rep. Fitzgibbon to retain energy committee
Chairs

- Carbon pricing alternatives
 - Cap and trade
 - Carbon tax
 - Low carbon fuel standard

Telecom Issues

Rep. Hudgins was not reelected leading to new chair of Telecom

- Public Works Board and CERB funding for broadband expansion
- Broadband Office funding to increase capabilities
- Retail telecom authority for PUDs
- Pole attachments and other possible issues associated with retail authority
- Digital equity

Other issues

- Dark fiber leasehold taxes (likely to be deferred until 2022)
- WPUDA priorities
 - COVID impacts relief for utilities
 - CETA compliance defer
 - CETA / EIA alignment dates
 - Water system consolidation grants