2021 State Legislative Session Preview

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Dec. 7, 2020
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 (telcom/broadband issues oversight)
  – Rep. Blake chaired the Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee
  – Sen. Takko chaired Senate Local Government
## Legislative Majorities (Election Years)

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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