



Dated: 4/7/10

Nearly 30 days have passed since the end of the regular legislative session. So far, no new news. At the time of this writing, the budget and taxes are still undecided. With the deadline for the end of the special session fast approaching, it does appear that resolution is close.

In a surprise move near the end of session, the Senate amended and passed the Governor's proposal to eliminate boards and commissions. The final version of the bill eliminated the Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Advisory Board, the Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Panel, and the Interagency Committee for Integrated Pest Management. The net effect should be minimal since the Department of Agriculture has promised to maintain a pesticide advisory board even though there will no longer be a statutory requirement. The Departments of Agriculture and Health will continue to report pesticide incidents and recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Labor and Industries to share resources and information when investigating pesticide incidents. The Interagency Committee for Integrated Pest Management had not been meeting regularly. Its primary function was to assist state agencies in developing IPM plans for their facilities. That work has been completed. The Noxious Weed Board had been on the chopping block, but was spared through a last minute amendment.

Other bills that passed late in session include SB 6267 that allows the Department of Ecology to expedite processing of water right applications. Ecology must determine the cost to process such applications and recover those costs by charging fees to those applicants who chose to participate.

SB 6575 deals with recommendations from the task force on the underground economy in construction. The existing Contractor Registration Act requires general and specialty contractors to register with the Department of Labor and Industries. A contractor who fails to register is subject to a fine ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The fine may be reduced to \$500 for a first offense if the contractor registers within 10 days of receiving a notice of infraction and completes a contractor training class within 120 days.

SB 5899 would have allowed a B&O tax credit for businesses with ten or fewer employees that create a new position for which a health care plan is offered. The bill did not pass.

Stay tuned for the final outcome on budget and taxes.

Prevailing wage

The Department of Labor and Industries has produced a new draft policy on the scope of work for landscape construction under the prevailing wage law. WALP's Lobbyist, Heather Hansen, feels confident in saying that significant progress has been made, however, the details are far from finalized and there may still be disagreement about what is included in landscape construction in several specific areas. A joint team including both WALP and the Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association (WSNLA) is doing an excellent job of providing input to Labor and Industries staff and helping them understand the type of work landscape contractors do.

Questions on any of the topics addressed in this "WALP Watch"? Contact the WALP Office at info@walp.org or (425) 967-0729.