



Olympia Report

Jim Honeyford

Serving all of Klickitat and Skamania counties, South Yakima county and southeast Clark county



State Senator • 15th District

JANUARY 2009

Welcome to the 2009 Legislative Session! I'm happy to bring back my Olympia Report, which will be mailed to you every two weeks.

This year, I am proud to continue serving as the ranking Republican member on the Senate Environment, Water and Energy Committee the Ways and Means Committee (which addresses taxes and spending, including two of the three state budgets) and on the Labor, Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

We have a lot of work to do during this 105-day session, which began on the 12th of January. To help you keep track of what's going on, here are some important dates:

- Feb. 25: Last day for the House and Senate standing committees to act on their own bills, except those necessary to implement budgets.
- March 2: Last day for the House and Senate fiscal committees to act on their own bills necessary to implement the budgets.
- March 12: Last day for the House and Senate to vote on their own bills, except those necessary to implement the budgets.
- March 30: Last day for the House and Senate standing committees to act on bills from the opposite chamber.
- April 6: Last day for the House and Senate fiscal committees to act on matters from the opposite chamber which are necessary to implement the budgets.
- April 17: Last day for the House and Senate to vote on bills from the opposite chamber, except those necessary to implement the budgets and bills in dispute between the chambers.
- April 26: Last day of the Legislative Session.

Important issues this session:

Budget

Washington is facing a budget deficit that is \$6 billion and growing. Our number-one priority this session is to adopt a supplemental budget that significantly cuts spending for the remaining six months of the current biennium (2007-09). This will ensure state government does not run out of money before the new 2009-11 budget takes effect July 1.

Second, we must build the 2009-11 budget using these three principles:

1. **Protect services for the most vulnerable.**
2. **Do not increase taxes and do not pass the buck to voters by asking them to approve a tax increase.**
3. **Adopt a budget that is transparent and sustainable.**

Health Care

I and my fellow Senate Republicans are on record for offering good ideas to increase access to affordable health care. We have offered a plan to help small businesses provide coverage for their employees. We've also offered a plan to cover the largest group of uninsured individuals in our state: 19- to 34-year-olds. We have opposed government-run health care because we don't want rationing and endless waiting lists for the people of our state. And, we've offered creative ideas like a non-profit health insurance exchange that could make a wide variety of health care plans available at the lowest possible cost.

Senate Republican Assistant Floor Leader

Committee assignments:

- Environment, Water & Energy, Ranking Member
- Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection
- Ways & Means

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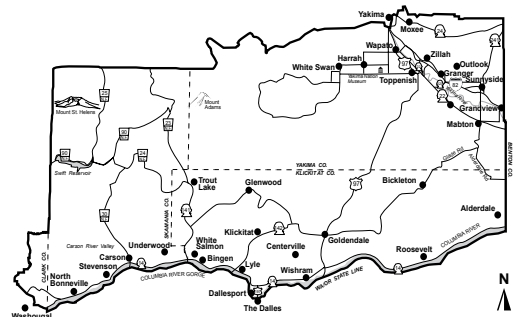
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15th District

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Bills I am working on:

Conservation & Energy

Senate Republicans support environmental and energy proposals aimed at promoting new technologies that will increase energy efficiencies, reduce fuel and heating costs, create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and – most importantly – respect individual choice and personal freedom. We are working toward a comprehensive energy policy for our state that includes more refineries, more nuclear power, recognition of hydropower as a renewable energy resource, clean coal plants, harnessing tidal power and increasing use of natural gas.

Fire Suppression Safety

Senate Bill 5023 would establish regulations to minimize the risk of fire resulting from railroad operations or maintenance and provides penalties for those who do not adhere to the regulations. I proposed this legislation after rail grinding activities in Skamania County started a fire that destroyed several homes in September 2007.

Amending School Year Requirements

Senate Bill 5112 would eliminate the 180-day school year requirement while maintaining the 1,000 instructional-hour requirement. When researching this bill I found that by permitting districts to lengthen the school day while allowing the flexibility to eliminate the requirement for a specific minimum number of school days, schools can continue to meet all of the other basic education program requirements while allowing the district to maintain consistent educational programs and staffing for students.

Amending I-937

Senate Bill 5137 would protect utility customers from soaring rate increases by amending the definition of renewable resources to include hydroelectricity. Initiative 937, enacted by the voters in November 2006, left hydropower off the list of eligible renewable resources from which public utilities must obtain 15 percent of their marketed power by 2020. Washington produces an abundance of hydroelectricity, but right now power companies have to pay for renewable resources that fall into our state's definition from other states like Oregon and California. Why not use resources we already have while keeping public utility rates low?

Please use this space for any comments, suggestions or problems you would like me to know about.
Or call the toll-free legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.



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Senator Jim Honeyford

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