

Weekly Legislative Update: **Transportation**

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Overview

Both the Senate and House Transportation Committees held public hearings on the Governor's supplemental Transportation Budget proposal this week, and the Senate held an update briefing on the Move Ahead Washington transportation funding package. That is the 16-year funding plan passed previously.

The Governor's priorities are:

- Safety: Reverse the historic trend of deaths on roadways
 - Speeding and impaired driving are top contributors to roadway fatalities
 - Behavioral changes of drivers can improve traffic safety for all
- Ferries: Improve service
 - Continue and expand workforce programs
 - Rethink state's role in passenger-only ferry
- Climate: Continue progress on implementing the Climate Commitment Act (CCA)
 - \$984 million in base budget
 - 18 years and under ride free
 - conversions and new hybrid-electric ferries
 - additional safe routes to school across the state
 - 30 new electric buses and more
 - Additional CCA funding for transportation purposes

Among the governor's proposal are large budget increments for new state patrol officers, ferry system workforce development and continued funding for the Kitsap Transit passenger-only ferry as well as \$11.2 million to convert a third Jumbo Mark II (Puyallup) vessel to hybrid electric. It also includes planning and research for revisiting the state's role in passenger-only ferry service and options for an inter-island passenger-only ferry service.

The budget proposal also includes continued (mandated) work on fish passage barrier removal, removal of homeless encampments in highway rights of way, and transfer of \$81.9 million to the transportation budget from the Climate Commitment Act fund to cover these costs:

- Electric vehicle charger deployment, \$20 million
- World Cup transportation planning, \$1 million
- Conversion of third Jumbo Mark II, \$11.2 million
- Stormwater, \$15 million

- Frequent accessible transit studies, \$900,000
- Tribal grants for electric fishing boats, \$5 million
- Zero emission vehicle supply equipment infrastructure, \$14 million
- State fleet electric utility vehicles, \$14 million
- Parks and Recreation Commission EV charging facilities, \$500,000

And more.

What is not included that League is supporting is work to include the rail system in transportation system planning in recognition of the benefits of rail for removal of passenger and freight from the highways, which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improved access for non-drivers to inter-city transportation. To date, most of the rail emphasis has been on the proposed high-speed interstate rail system.

The Senate also heard a briefing on the interstate bridge project, for which an EIS is anticipated in spring this year.

It was reported that youth ridership on transit has increased dramatically with the appropriation for free rides for youth under 18. The percentages of increase range from 22% in one area to 360% in another, with the largest percentage increases in the more rural areas.

Additionally, the Senate briefing included information about ports and use of the CCA Funds for Port Electrification and Carbon Emission Reduction Projects, including zero-emission initiatives for marine vessels and locomotives, port shore power systems and more.

In addition to the Governor's Supplemental Budget proposal, the House Transportation Committee heard updates on DOT work, State Patrol and Department of Licensing.

Bills We Are Following

This is the beginning of the session, and additional bills will be added in the next few weeks.

SHB 1368/SB 5431 Requiring and funding the purchase of zero emission school buses. This bill had a public hearing in the House Appropriations Committee this past week and is scheduled for executive session on January 18. The bill would mandate acquisition of zero-emission buses for school transport with technical and financial support from OSPI and Ecology. This would reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as reduce health risks to children who ride the buses.

Resource Information

Transportation Choices Coalition, one of the coalitions to which League belongs, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. If you haven't been aware of this group, check it out [here](#).

How You Can Be Involved

- Respond to Action Alerts in the legislative newsletter. These will primarily appear in the section of the newsletter related to transportation.
- Contact Cynthia Stewart, cstewart@lwwa.org, to receive additional information.