

# 2009 Session Review

15th Legislative District

Spring 2009

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- Solutions for the district

*Beacon Rock near Stevenson*



## 15th Legislative District Report on the 2009 Legislative Session

Dear friends and neighbors,

The 2009 legislative session adjourned on April 26. Arguably, this was one of the most difficult sessions in memory, but that did not deter us from focusing on the needs and interests of the hard-working people we represent.

The grim budget news dominated much of our attention. Due to years of overspending and a continually declining revenue forecast, the state faced a potential budget shortfall of approximately \$9 billion.

Adding to this bleak situation was the state's jobless rate, which in April reached 9.2 percent – nearly double what it was a year ago. Our district has been hit hard, too. Klickitat and Skamania counties have seen unemployment rates of more than 13 percent, while joblessness in Yakima County reached 10.6 percent. Clark County reported an unemployment rate of 12.5 percent. Thousands of people are out of work through no fault of their own.

Individuals and families are making hard decisions, being forced to do more with less. We believe state government should do the same. And that is why we pushed hard for a no-new-taxes-budget that makes a clear distinction between what we want and what we can afford.

The 15th District team has a new look this year, but there is no change in our pledge to provide the people of our district with the same effective and reliable voice you expect and deserve in Olympia. If you have questions or comments to share, please call, send an e-mail or write a letter. We welcome your ideas and opinions, and are always glad to hear from you. It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,



  
**Sen. Jim Honeyford**      **Rep. Bruce Chandler**      **Rep. David Taylor**



### Sen. Jim Honeyford Deputy Republican Floor Leader

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#### Committees:

- Environment, Water & Energy, ranking Republican
- Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection
- Ways and Means

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#### Committees:

- Agriculture & Natural Resources, ranking Republican
- Ways and Means
- Commerce and Labor

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#### Committees:

- State Government and Tribal Affairs
- Technology, Energy and Communications
- Ecology and Parks



### Meet Rep. David Taylor

Shortly after his March 30 appointment by the 12 county commissioners in the 15th District, David was sworn in by Klickitat County Superior Court Judge E. Thompson Reynolds, becoming the newest member of the district's legislative team. He succeeded former Rep. Dan Newhouse, who resigned in February to become director of the state Department of Agriculture.

The 37-year-old agriculture consultant and rancher stepped right into his new responsibilities and began working the issues important to our district. David is committed to continuing the 15th District's long-standing tradition of strong, principled representation.

A graduate of Ellensburg High School and Central Washington University, David is a former director of the Kittitas County Community Development Services Department. He also served five years as planning director in Kittitas County. In 2004 David opened Taylor Consulting Group, which specializes in land-use, water and agriculture issues, policy development and government relations. David and his wife, Molly raise cattle on Taylor Angus Ranch, and are co-owners of D Bar D Custom Fabricators. They reside in Moxee with their children Tiffany, 12, and Brock, 10.

## Budgets and taxes

Our state faced a \$9 billion shortfall this year. We saw this situation as an opportunity for restructuring and truly prioritizing the functions of government.

Unfortunately, majority members voted to fill more than half the budget deficit with one-time dollars from the federal government, capital budget and other fund transfers. The adopted budget, which we voted against, continues the same level of spending as the last budget because of these one-time dollars. We believe this is an unsustainable way to run our state. In two years, we could be right back where we started.

To address these budgeting decisions, the majority did not prioritize spending and cut waste, but once again turned to the taxpayers for a bailout.

Proposals included: an increase in the sales tax, higher property taxes, increasing the business and occupation tax, and even a state income tax. Fortunately the will of thousands of citizens around the state forced these ideas off the agenda. However, many fee increases were adopted, including: hiking tuition rates for students, birth and death certificate fees, a tire replacement fee, increased court fees, and an automatic fee for state parks on your car tabs unless you 'opt-out.'

We opposed these tax and fee increases because of their detrimental impact to our economy and job creation.

## Agriculture

The agriculture industry employs more than 160,000 people and accounts for 13 percent of our state's economic production. In 2007, the value of that exported production was \$9.3 billion. To protect these jobs and economic value, the state must reduce regulations and allow farms access to the resources they need to continue to be viable in today's economy.

Two proposals that would have imposed taxes on farms did not pass. The first would have added business and occupation taxes on farms. The second would have taxed farm auctions. We strongly opposed both of these measures.



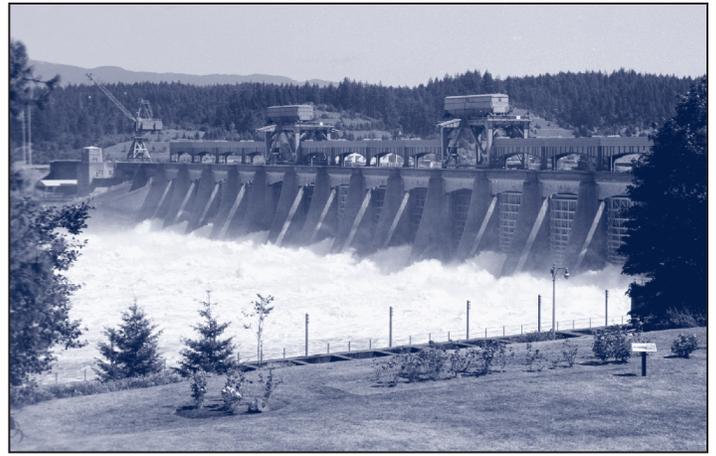
We're happy to report that \$500,000 in funding for the Community Agriculture Vocational Institute was included in the operating budget. In addition,

\$150,000 was set aside for researching honey bee colony collapse disorder at Washington State University. Both of these are critical to the success of agriculture in the future.

We believe farms would preserve more water if they were given an incentive, instead of a penalty, for not using all of their rights to water. We supported several proposals that would protect water-right holders and encourage better management of water:

- **Senate Bill 5692** and **House Bill 1266** would have addressed sufficient cause for the non-use of water;
- **Senate Bill 5114** and House Bill 1268 would have prevented water relinquishment if water-right holders use a portion of the right; and
- **House Bill 1269** would have defined crop rotation.

Unfortunately, none of these bills passed this session. We will continue our efforts to address water rights during the interim.



## Legislature considers cap-and-trade program

This session the governor, the environmental movement and the majority party in Olympia pushed a cap-and-trade program that could lead to the biggest middle-class tax increase in state history.

**Senate Bill 5735** would have created a program to cap carbon emissions and create an unregulated market for trading credits. This approach to dealing with climate change sets the stage for limits on how much you can drive your car, leading to soaring energy rates, business closures and massive job losses. Our biggest concern is that this will hurt the poorest in our state the most.

According to a report released by Beacon Hill Institute, an economic research institute, should cap-and-trade be implemented, Washington could lose:

- 18,292 net jobs;
- \$5.71 billion in personal income; and
- \$302.54 in per capita disposable income.

This was a bad bill that we were proud to oppose, and were happy to see die on the last day of session. A cap-and-tax system will drive up energy costs for families. Washington is unique in that we have inexpensive, abundant and renewable hydropower, but this bill puts our employers at a great disadvantage in a competitive global market.

We expect this program to be promoted again in the future, and will continue to fight for working families and employers.



*Rep. Taylor and Rep. Chandler confer during a break in the House chambers.*



Sen. Joe Zarelli (Ridgefield) and Sen. Honeyford ponder legislation on the Senate floor.

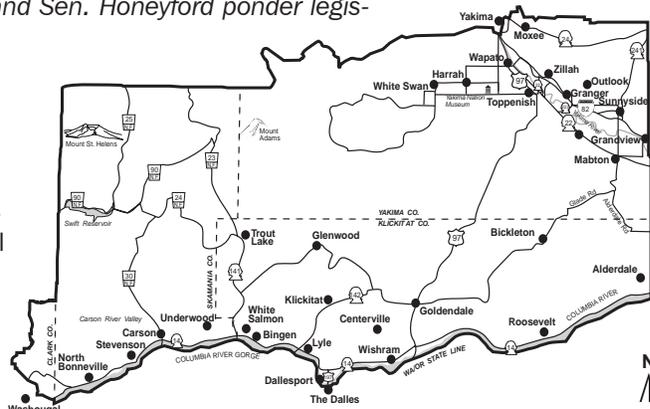
## Local legislation

### Timberland management transfer

**House Bill 1595** would allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to transfer land management to other public entities within Skamania, Klickitat, Pacific and Wahkiakum counties. Smaller counties dependent on timber revenue have been unable to harvest timber due to habitat conservation efforts. This bill allows DNR to buy replacement land for habitat conservation and free up more land for timber harvest. We were glad to support this bill to help the local economies of Skamania and Klickitat counties. Unfortunately, this bill died in the Senate this year.

### Flexible school calendar

Superintendents Martin Huffman and Ric Palmer, from the Lyle and Bickleton school districts respectively, came to us to ask for some flexibility with their school calendar. As a result of the time and energy they invested in bringing this issue before the Legislature – which led to its adoption of **House Bill 1292** – waivers from the requirement for a 180-day school year will be provided to five school districts with fewer than



### 15th Legislative District

500 students. It has been delivered to the governor and we await her signature.

The bill would allow school districts to adapt their schedules around their communities' needs so they can more efficiently achieve academic success. We believe the state has placed enough mandates on our schools.

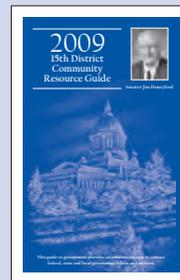
### Apple maggot monitoring program

Yakima County ranks second in the state for market value of crop and livestock products. Washington is first in the nation for its production of apples. As a result, it's important to protect the exports and interests of this crop. We supported **Senate Bill 5765** to provide \$150,000 through current assessments on the produce industry for the apple maggot monitoring program.

It was signed into law by the governor. This \$150,000 will protect at least \$300 million in apple exports to places around the world, and protect the local growers and related industries here at home.

### Wind energy tax exemption

Clark County is home to the Port of Vancouver, through which a vast number of wind turbines travel on to other locations. We supported **Senate Bill 6170**, which among other things provides sales tax incentives for machinery and equipment used for solar and wind power for the next four years. This exemption will keep business moving through the port, and support alternative energies that reduce our reliance on foreign oil, foster American innovation and create jobs.



### 2009 Community Resource Guide Available Online

[senaterepublicans.wa.gov/honeyford](http://senaterepublicans.wa.gov/honeyford)

This guide to government provides you with information on how to contact federal, state and local government offices and services. We have made it available online to save printing costs.

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