

2012 Washington State Legislature • Report to the 19th District



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Committees:

- Agriculture & Natural Resources (Chair)
- Business & Financial Services
- General Government Appropriations & Oversight



Senator

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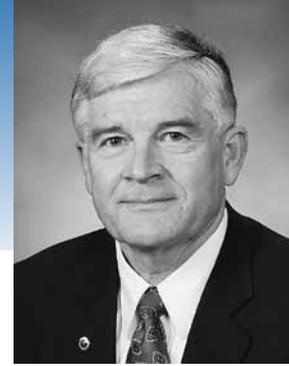
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Committees:

- Agriculture, Water & Rural Economic Development (Chair)
- Economic Development Trade & Innovation
- Ways & Means



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Committees:

- Local Government (Chair)
- Environment
- Transportation

Dear Friends,

Our first and most important emphasis today is telling you what a great honor it is representing the 19th Legislative District.

The 2012 Regular Session convened in January. We hit the ground running, picking up where we left off during the late-2011 Special Session. During that time at the Legislature, we made the painful budget-cutting decisions that were necessary due to the reality of the State's revenue situation. Even though an increased demand on public services remained, there simply was not enough revenue to maintain and pay for all such services and programs. It took another Special Session to settle on how these severe, ongoing cuts would do the least damage to essential services.

Thank you for reviewing this edition of our Report to the 19th District. The following pages examine some of the issues that we were most involved in this year. Beyond the specific discussions inside, we're glad to report the success of levy-equalization legislation to help smaller school districts, as well as appropriation of sufficient funding for the Naselle Youth Camp, county fairs, and conservation districts.

We're appreciative of your interest and participation in the legislative process. Please stay connected with us. Speak your piece whenever you have time, and in whatever communications-style works best for you. We look forward to seeing you at neighborhood meetings and community events all around the 19th District.

Wishing you and yours a safe and peaceful summer,

Rep. Brian Blake

Sen. Brian Hatfield

Rep. Dean Takko

Timber country

Establishing more predictability for jobs in our local communities

For many years, there has been a frustrating injustice in our timber counties. Wahkiakum County, Pacific County and several other Washington regions struggle to deal with their natural resources being held captive by the federal government.

Some local county governments, including Wahkiakum and Pacific counties, are forced to find a way to pay for critical public services and programs -- in spite of the fact that they're hamstrung by federal laws that drastically reduce their revenues. Counties that have existing state-forest lands that are "encumbered" with 30-year (or longer) timber-harvest deferrals, cannot harvest and



sell their timber. Specifically, "encumbered" means state forests held back from harvesting timber because of federal protection of wildlife species under the federal Endangered Species Act. The affected regions of Washington State are blessed with thousands of potentially valuable acres of timber land, but sales are stymied by federal restrictions. Simply put, many of our counties have lost the ability to log lands that are restricted due to the very presence of Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet habitat.

Without the drag of these federal regulations, the local counties could manage much better - perhaps quite well, in fact. When timber sales are restricted by the feds, property-tax revenues go down the next year or two, and the county's budgets are stressed. We wanted to see some predictability and sustainability in terms of timber receipts.

So, we sponsored legislation in the Senate and in the House of Representatives to authorize counties with land managed by the state Department of Natural Resources to be pooled together. These counties may join together to purchase replacement lands that are not necessarily in the county receiving the benefits when the land is logged. **House Bill 2329** was signed into law on March 29th. This new law will be a boon **not** just for the beneficiaries of trust land -- but for the environment, as well. It has the potential of preserving the economic viability of small counties, while maintaining species protection.

Marine Spatial Planning

For our coastal counties, it's far better to have "a seat at the table than to be on the menu"

Marine Spatial Planning is a process calling for proactive, comprehensive state decision-making to support healthy oceans, coasts, and communities. With data on the location of important marine resources, human activities, and other key components, this process identifies the best locations for particular uses.

There are 15 coastal counties in Washington. That adds up to about 2,000 square miles of marine waters and more than 2,300 linear miles of marine shoreline. So it's not hard to see that our state relies heavily on healthy marine waters and resources. Numerous marine uses -- maritime shipping and fishing industries, tourism, boating and other recreational activities -- help drive our state's economy. But these uses sometimes conflict with one another -- and new uses, such as renewable energy production, will put further demands on the land and water.

We must protect and sustain our marine resources for future generations while allowing appropriate uses in the right locations. Marine Spatial Planning will help us achieve such a balance.

In March 2010, the Legislature enacted a law directing an interagency team to provide recommendations about how to

effectively use Marine Spatial Planning in Washington. We incorporated those recommendations this year in terms of **Senate Bill 6263**. This new state standard is aimed specifically at helping the five counties on the outer coast (Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson and Pacific), which are ready to move forward with marine spatial planning so they don't have to wait for the rest of the state to catch up.

Unfortunately, the governor vetoed two important sections of SB 6263, which would have given the outer coastal counties a stronger voice in the process. We're disappointed that this happened and are committed to crafting legislation in the future to strengthen local stakeholder input.



Legacy biomass – sustaining and creating jobs

Working to help towns and rural areas that have suffered double-digit unemployment for years

We won support for legislation that modifies the definition of biomass energy. The measure also allows qualified biomass energy to be used to satisfy an eligible renewable-resource target, as directed under terms of the voter-approved (2006) Initiative 937.

Substitute Senate Bill 5575 specifies how renewable-energy credits that are associated with qualified biomass energy can be used, transferred, or sold.

We've been working on this bill for a very long time. The objective is to help communities that have been dealing with double-digit unemployment for years -- since long before the Great Recession, actually. This new state law is the culmination of more than five years of work and cooperation by folks who recognize that the quest for renewable energy is as much about maintaining jobs as it is about generating energy.

Washington's timber industry has been suffering through nightmarish decades of mill closures. Recently, Grays Harbor experienced the shuttering of the Grays Harbor Paper facility. At the time, Grays Harbor Paper was one of the few remaining paper mills in our state, a valued employer in the Aberdeen-Hoquiam community.



Rep. Blake, Rep. Takko and Sen. Hatfield attend SB 5575 Bill signing with Gov. Gregoire

Changes in pulp/timber industry

The disastrous impacts of changes in the pulp and timber industry were to blame for that shutdown. We simply must do more to ensure that these facilities aren't threatened. These businesses provide good, family-wage jobs for hundreds and serve as a backbone for their respective communities.

Obviously, there are external pressures, such as globalization and the federal laws that have slammed the industry. But we must do everything in our power to protect these jobs.

In 2006, the passage of Initiative 937 required that electric utilities acquire renewable-energy resources to meet 15-percent of their load. While this initiative has had positive impacts with jobs created by other renewable-energy sources, such as wind generation, it has also threatened the viability of major employers in rural communities. These are employers that provide hundreds of very good jobs.

The new state policy in SSB 5575 will help electric utilities and major industries in our rural communities as they work to reduce the cost of the initiative. It will allow biomass generation -- power generated from wood-waste -- to qualify as a power source that can be used by electric utilities to more cost-effectively meet their obligations under I-937. Through this bill, we will sustain industries and the workforce that harvest timber, that truck the timber to the mills, and that make their living at the mills. The measure will also help those who buy power from the electric utilities serving that industry.

Critical Access Hospitals

Many hospitals in small-town and rural Washington serve senior citizens and low-income working families

Perhaps you'll recall some of the most hard-hitting cuts in the Governor's original budget proposal. Responding in really the only way she could to the Great Recession, the Governor proposed cutting Medicaid funding for reimbursement rates to critical-access hospitals by more than \$13 million.

A good many of these hospitals serve rural Washington; they are a vital link in an integrated, statewide hospital system. The proposed cuts could potentially result in the closing of one or all three of these hospitals in our communities: Willapa

Harbor Hospital in South Bend, Mark Reed Hospital in McCleary, and Ocean Beach Hospital in Ilwaco. Eliminating these health centers would be devastating to many coastal and Southwest Washington citizens. They'd be left with no alternatives.

We joined with other lawmakers in a bipartisan fashion to prevent these cuts. It's a relief to report that funding for all of Washington's critical-care hospitals is fully maintained in the final supplemental budget.



Ocean Beach Hospital, Ilwaco

Redistricting

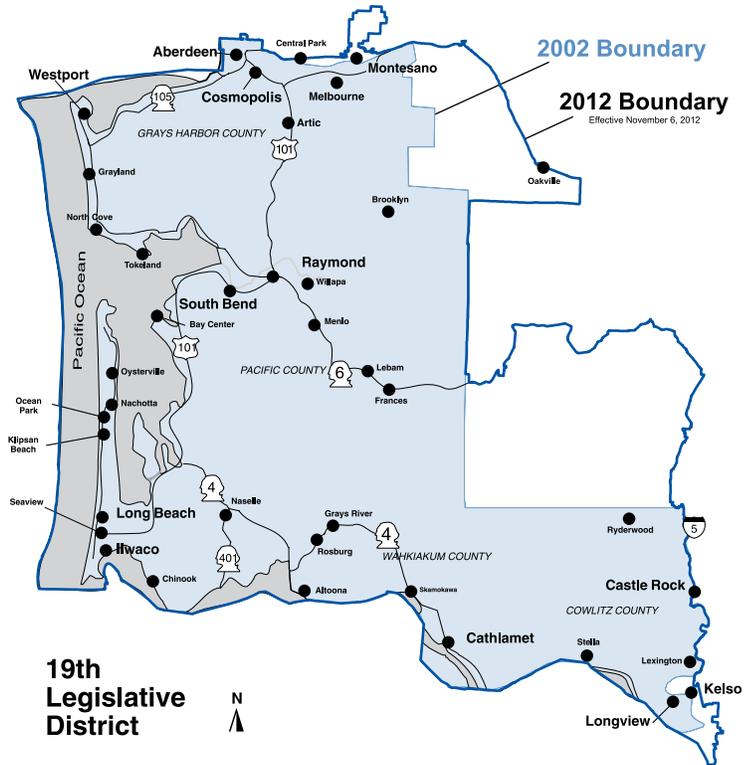
As you know, every ten years, with the U.S. Census information as a guide, the Redistricting Commission is tasked with adjusting legislative districts so that each one of our 49 districts across the state has the same number of constituents. Here's a map that shows the new boundaries of our 19th district that is effective as of November 6, 2012:

Millions of \$\$\$ coming to southwest Washington!

Capital budget means improvements and jobs for the 19th!!!

One of the most important aspects of the recovery from the Great Recession is putting men and women in our district and our state back to work.

Statewide, over \$1 billion will be put into economic development projects, creating over 18,000 jobs. In the 19th District, one of those projects will include a sewer line extension project at the Satsop Business Park. By linking the park with the City of Elma's wastewater treatment plant, 150 jobs will be created immediately with hundreds more to follow in coming years.



Other projects in the Capital Budget include:

| | |
|--|--|
| Community and Technical College System Lower Columbia College: Health and Science Building | \$38,615,000 |
| Department of Natural Resources - Restoration Projects to improve Natural Resources Ellsworth Creek Watershed Restoration | \$1,020,000 |
| Department of Health - Safe Reliable Drinking Water Grants Ilwaco Water Treatment Plant | \$940,000 |
| Department of Fish and Wildlife - Hatchery Improvements Humptulips Hatchery – Build a new intake on Stevens Creek Forks Creek Hatchery – Renovate adult ponds Lake Aberdeen Hatchery Pollution Abatement Pond Humptulips Hatchery Pollution Abatement Pond Forks Creek Hatchery Pollution Abatement Pond Lake Aberdeen Hatchery Install Pipeline to City Diversion | \$905,000 \$900,000 \$850,000 \$850,000 \$850,000 \$675,000 |
| Department of Commerce Innovation Partnership Zones – Facilities and Infrastructure Reuse of Industrial By-Products and Waste – Grays Harbor Public Works Assistance Account Program 2013 Loan List Indian Creek Water Plant Upflow Clarifier Front Avenue Water/Sewer Main Replacement Main Street Improvement Grants Downtown Longview Corridor Project | \$750,000 \$890,000 \$461,000 \$500,000 |
| Department of Ecology - FY 2012 Statewide Stormwater Grant Program Longview- Municipal Previous Concrete | \$86,000 |

Let there be light!

Walking and driving over the Chehalis River Bridge is going to be safer

Sometimes, it's true: Good things come to those who wait.

It took five years, but finally now Aberdeen folks and visitors will actually "see the light" when they walk across the Chehalis River Bridge! The memorable storm of 2006 weakened an old, rusted lighting pole -- toppling it over and onto a car. Fortunately, the driver survived, but the incident did result in the removal of more than a dozen lights on the bridge. And that's when a bit of feud sprang up between the city and the state as to who should be responsible for replacing the lights.

Built in 1955, the bridge currently carries more than 10,000 vehicles every day. Solving this lighting situation has been a priority for us. So, we're very happy to report that we have secured \$445,000 in Chehalis River Bridge-lighting money in the Supplemental Transportation Budget.



Other projects in the Transportation Budget include:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Highway Improvements Program – Mobility | |
| I-5/SR 432 Talley Way Interchanges - Rebuild Interchanges | \$8,428,000 |
| Highway Improvements Program - Safety | |
| I-5/Kelso Vicinity Median Crossover Prevention - Install Cable Barrier | \$17,000 |
| US 101/Fort Columbia Vicinity - Left Turn Lane | \$94,000 |
| Highway Improvements Program - Economic Initiatives | |
| I-5/Lewis County Detour for Freight Mobility - ITS Projects | \$2,374,000 |
| Highway Improvements Program - Environmental Retrofit | |
| SR 105/Norris Slough - Culvert Replacement | \$1,282,000 |
| Highway Preservation Program - Roadway Preservation | |
| SR 100/SR 100 Including Spur - Chip Seal | \$957,000 |
| Highway Preservation Program - Structures Preservation | |
| Astoria-Megler Bridge - South End Painter | \$7,725,000 |
| SR 105/North River Br - Replace Bridge | \$7,596,000 |
| SR 105/Smith Creek Br - Replace Bridge | \$4,440,000 |
| SR 107/Chehalis River Bridge - Seismic Retrofit | \$924,000 |
| SR 6/Willapa River Br - Replace Bridge | \$1,281,000 |
| US 101/ Astoria-Megler Bridge- North End Painter | \$6,503,000 |
| US 101/Bone River Bridge - Replace Bridge | \$11,328,000 |
| US 101/Middle Nemah River Br - Replace Bridge | \$4,976,000 |
| Rail Capital Program - Essential Rail Assistance and Banking | |
| Port of Longview Rail Loop (2012 FRIB) | \$858,000 |

State "Good Samaritan Act"

We need **House Bill 2261** to make sure the organizations are able to continue their important programs and public service of recycling eyeglasses and hearing aids. Current Washington law -- the "Good Samaritan Act" -- says people who render care at an emergency (as long as these people don't expect any compensation for their benevolence) have immunity from liability in any lawsuits that might be considered against them.

The law has been muscled up over the years. Specifically, immunity is assured for physicians and other health-care providers volunteering health-care services either with nonprofit organizations or with for-profit groups that regularly provide services to uninsured people. In order for the immunity-protection to apply, services must be given without either payment or any expectation of payment

Alaska, Arizona and Oregon have all passed laws specifically to shield charitable organizations from liability for facilitating donations of used eyeglasses. So now, Washington is getting with the program.

Right thing to do

Here's a new standard that's all about helping people who help people

Here's another "good little bill" that comes down to common sense. Why not clear some legal snags that hinder non – profits from helping others? We backed a bill establishing peace of mind for community organizations, such as the Lions, who are lending a hand to those who are vision and hearing-impaired.

OK, here's a little back story. Eighty-seven years ago, Helen Keller delivered a stirring, inspiring keynote address at a Lions International Convention. Among the points Keller hammered home that day, she challenged Lions "to become Knights of the Blind in the crusade against darkness." Lions have been meeting Ms. Keller's challenge and helping the blind not only in our communities and in our country, but all over the world.

Every year, upward of 200,000 pairs of good-quality used eyeglasses are distributed to those who are vision-impaired. Our legislation puts a limit on the legal liability of charitable organizations, such as the Lions, when these groups provide previously owned eyeglasses or hearing-assistance instruments.

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