

# 24th Legislative District Legislative Report 2009

Dear Neighbors:

After 105 days of ups and downs and twists and turns, the 2009 legislative session adjourned in late April and we want to take a minute to share what was accomplished for you in Olympia.

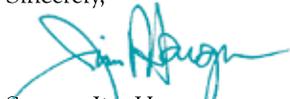
This year we came face to face with the impacts of the worldwide economic recession. Unemployment is at record levels and families all across the 24th district are feeling the pain. That's why in addition to protecting our most vulnerable, this year we focused on what we can do to help middle-class families move forward in this time of economic uncertainty.

The biggest accomplishment for families in our area and across the state is the increased weekly unemployment benefits, which were boosted by \$45 at the state level, and \$25 by Congress, for a combined increase of \$70 a week. This quick action is already directly helping families that have lost their jobs in the wake of the recession.

These changes recently went into effect and unemployed workers are now seeing their increased benefits. With these improvements, new worker retraining efforts and the millions in construction projects, we're investing in our local economies to rebuild our infrastructure and get people back to work. We've also closed a \$9 billion budget shortfall – the largest in our state's history – without raising taxes.

We take the privilege and responsibility we have as your representatives seriously and do our best to make sure all of the diverse voices in our district are heard in Olympia. Please visit our websites for more information on this historic session and always feel free to contact any of our offices for more information or if there's something we can do to help you.

Sincerely,



Senator Jim Hargrove



Rep. Lynn Kessler



Rep. Kevin Van De Wege



Senator

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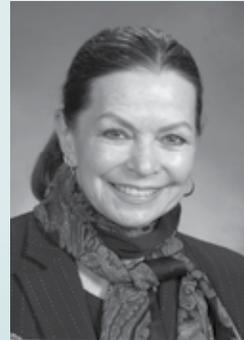
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## Senator Jim Hargrove

### Committees for 2009:

- Human Services & Corrections, Chair
- Judiciary
- Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation

## 2009 Highlights

### Jobs. Family Security. Better Government.

From Neah Bay to Quilcene, Port Townsend to Ocean Shores, families all across the Peninsula are bearing the brunt of the troubled economy. There are a number of bills we've passed this year that will help create jobs, make sure families don't have to choose between food or rent and reform government.

### Log Truck Tax Relief

In our area, families have depended on hauling logs to pay the bills for generations. This recession is the



perfect time to give some tax relief to families and businesses across Washington. We've reduced the amount truckers will pay in utility taxes and helped their bottom line.

### Worker Retraining

We've had a number of mills go down on the Olympic Peninsula and we've seen industries dry up and put hundreds of families out of work. My bill funds new worker retraining programs at local community and technical colleges across the state to get some of our state's 300,000 unemployed workers back to work. It's an opportunity for some of our workers to change their career, or retool their skills for the careers they're already in.

### Child Welfare Reform

Recent years have shown a dramatic increase in complaints and fatalities involving children under



DSHS's supervision. Our new law transitions the Child Welfare Services to use performance-based contracts for services such as foster care, adoption, family preservation and group care living. These reforms are some of the biggest changes to DSHS in 20 years.

### Offender Supervision Reform

This year we faced the toughest budget situation in Washington's history, a crisis that demanded we look at everything to see where we could find savings, which is why we brought much needed reform to our community supervision efforts. We focused our efforts on approaches that have been proven to work, which will reduce expenses to the taxpayers of Washington without hurting public safety.





## Representative Lynn Kessler

House Majority Leader

### Committees for 2009:

- Ways and Means
- Rules
- Executive Rules

## 2009 Highlights

### State Parks to Remain Open

Tough economic times can put vacation plans on hold for many families, but our state parks offer hiking, swimming, camping, picnicking, boating and nature-watching at little or no cost. This year, the state's budget shortfall threatened to close many parks, including several popular ones in our district. My office received an astonishing 10,000 signatures in support of keeping Lake Sylvia and other state parks across the 24th district open. In response to the overwhelming concerns from residents, I pushed for a voluntary opt-out fee to keep parks open. If you can afford it, please consider paying the \$5 optional fee when you renew your car tabs and help keep our state parks open for everyone.



### Recycled Paper Requirement Keeps Jobs in District

By December 31, 2009, all state agencies with 25 or more employees will be required to purchase 100 percent recycled white paper for use in office printers and copiers. By July 1, 2010, each state agency is also required to develop and implement a paper conservation program with a goal of at least a 30 percent reduction in current paper use. Besides conserving resources, these new requirements are good for companies like Grays Harbor Paper, one of our local paper mills that produces 100% recycled paper.

### Economic Development for Rural Counties

Rural counties fund certain public works projects by bonding the sales tax money they receive. But the amount of money is small – 9/10ths of 1 percent – so I sponsored a bill to help counties stretch those dollars. By extending the time period for bonding to 25 years, the funds will be able to be used for larger projects. This helps our rural communities pay for things like water and sewer improvements while creating job opportunities for local workers.

### Help For the Trucking Industry

Everyone is feeling the pinch of the recession right now but truck haulers have been in an economic crisis for years. One of the major reasons is high fuel costs. I sponsored a resolution calling on Congress to enact legislation that would provide low-cost loans to the trucking industry to help with high fuel costs. This resolution sends a message to our elected officials in DC that we value our truckers and want to save their jobs and help them get their goods to market.

### Protection for Tenant Victims

Imagine that you or a family member is the victim of sexual harassment, abuse or stalking. Now imagine that your harasser, abuser or stalker has a key to your home and the ability to enter at any time. How could you ever sleep at night? I stood up for people who are victimized by their landlords and sponsored a bill that gives victims the ability to break a lease without penalty or change the locks on their doors.



## Representative Kevin Van De Wege

### Deputy Majority Whip

#### Committees for 2009:

- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- General Government Appropriations
- Rules
- Technology, Energy & Communications

## 2009 Highlights

### Year-round Rescue Tug Fully Funded At Last

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Exxon-Valdez oil spill. For years, the taxpayers have footed the bill for a rescue tug to be stationed at Neah Bay to help prevent an Exxon-Valdez-type disaster here. But the funding hasn't always been enough for year-round coverage, leaving us vulnerable to oil spills. I sponsored a bill that will shift the cost of a permanent, year-round rescue vessel to the shipping industry. Beginning in 2010, they will pick up the tab, saving Washington taxpayers over \$3.5 million a year.



### Clean Fuel From Our Forests

In the future, we may power our vehicles or heat our buildings with forest biomass. This potentially-untapped fuel source is abundant in our district and could mean the growth of an important industry. I championed legislation to study the possibilities in using our forest biomass as energy, but in a way that won't disrupt current chip production. Besides job creation and reduced dependence on foreign oil, using forest biomass for fuel could help prevent wildfires.

### Helping Our Courts Fight Crime

Since 1999, the population in Division II of our Court of Appeals has increased by 230,000 people and 11 Superior Court judges. This has increased the volume of cases before the Court of Appeals. I wanted to ensure that the courts could handle their loads and fight crime effectively, so I sponsored a bill to authorize one additional Court of Appeals judge. The position will become effective only once funding is available.

### Keeping Wildlife Wild

Humans feeding wildlife creates serious public health and safety issues. Some animals may appear tame or gentle but can exhibit extremely aggressive behavior, especially when being fed. They also can cause property damage. The increased presence of some animals, like raccoons, increases the chance to spread diseases like rabies. For all these reasons, I pushed to ban public feeding of wildlife this session. Although the bill did not come up for a floor vote this year, it's an issue that I plan to keep working on and I welcome your feedback on it.

### Transparency in Car Rental Fees

Nobody likes surprises on their bills and this session I supported legislation to make car rental charges more transparent, so people know exactly what they are paying for. I am particularly pleased that the bill includes protections for families who order a child seat when renting a car. If the seat is not provided within an hour of the customer's arrival, the reservation can be cancelled without penalty. This new law takes place at the end of July. Many other states already provide these protections, and now Washington will too.

# Reinvestment and Recovery for the 24<sup>th</sup> District

Over the next two years there are over \$7 billion in investments coming to Washington's infrastructure. Here are some of the projects in our area that will stimulate local economies and create jobs:



Nearly \$35 million at Peninsula College for a new Business and Humanities Center



\$120 million for Two new ferries for the Port Townsend – Keystone run

\$5 million for roadside safety improvements at Hwy 112 between Neah Bay and Seiku

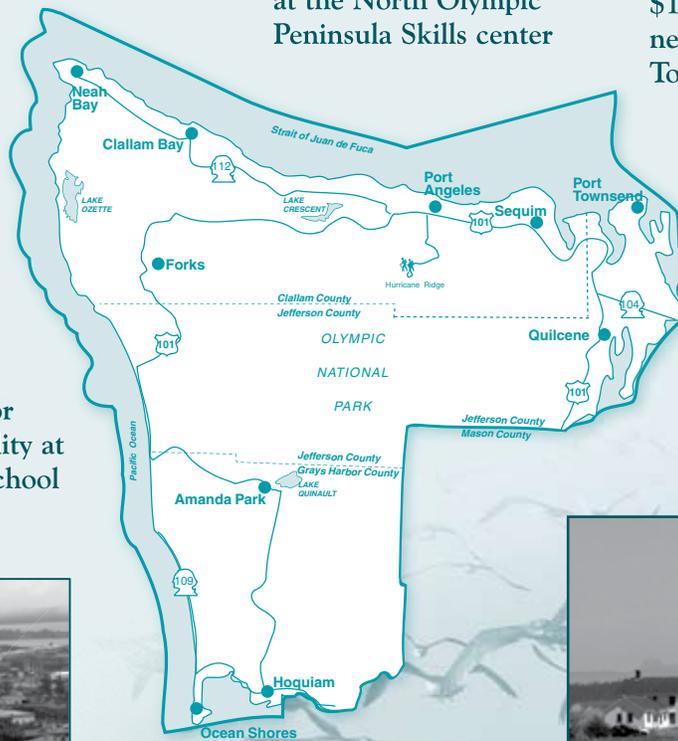
\$438,000 investment at the North Olympic Peninsula Skills center

\$5 million in infrastructure improvements at the Clallam Bay Corrections Center

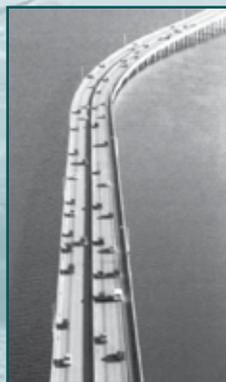
\$19 million to widen Hwy 101 west of Sequim between Shore Rd and Kitchen Rd

\$1 million in funding for the biomass energy facility at the Quillayute Valley School District

\$2.75 million for improving Fort Warden State Park in Port Townsend



\$3 million for the Port of Grays Harbor to enhance the deep water bulk liquid terminal for Westway Terminals.



At least \$500 million in site and pontoon construction for the 520 floating bridge on Lake Washington.

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**Sen. Jim Hargrove**  
**Rep Lynn Kessler**  
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