

Ken Jacobsen

2008 Legislative Session Wrap-up



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If you visit my above listed webpage, you can sign up to receive email updates about legislation and issues affecting our district.

Committee Assignments:

- Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (Chair)
- Agriculture & Rural Economic Development
- Consumer Protection & Housing
- Transportation



Summer 2008

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for allowing me to be your advocate in Olympia over the years. I continually strive to focus on legislation that addresses major issues in the 46th District and beyond such as marine resources, veterans' rights, transportation, education, and many other important issues.

On March 13th we completed the short, 60-day legislative session. As with most short sessions, our primary task was to address budget issues that emerged since last year's adoption of the two-year operating and capital budgets. We also set a course for defining policy issues and constituent service needs that warrant closer attention next year.

The fierce December 2007 storm in southwest Washington devastated thousands of families and caused huge economic losses. This session, lawmakers took steps to help the region recover and discussed how the state can better prepare for and respond to natural catastrophes. As chair of the Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation Committee, I saw the destruction firsthand during a tour of the Chehalis area. I witnessed both the power of nature and the compassion and selflessness of the storm survivors and volunteers who came to help.

With predictions of a negative financial forecast on the horizon, we placed approximately \$800 million in our state's savings account. We then crafted a disciplined, frugal budget that addressed important needs like storm relief, affordable housing, and help for struggling students, health care access, and job creation.

These are just some of the issues we focused on this session and I have already been busy working towards issues I plan to address next session. Most of my ideas come from people I talk to. I'd like to hear of any ideas you may have to improve our state.

Again, thank you for allowing me to serve as your state senator.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature of Ken Jacobsen, written in a cursive style.

Senator Ken Jacobsen
46th Legislative District



Protecting our Natural Environment

Addressing Climate Change

Washington continues to be a national leader in responding to global climate change. This year, we adopted House Bill 2815 to move forward with emission limits.

This measure directs the Department of Ecology to design and submit to the Legislature for approval in 2009, a program and market-based incentives to limit and reduce statewide greenhouse gases. Under the law, the Department of Transportation will offer recommendations to the Legislature for long term reduction per capita of vehicle miles traveled. We anticipate the need for significant public input and debate before the Legislature would approve or adopt any specific strategies.

Climate Change, Considering the Growth Management Act

Many of the steps necessary to address global warming must be taken at the city and county level, through local transportation and zoning decisions. Senate Bill 6580 provides new tools for cities and counties to take climate change into account in their local growth management planning.

Urban Tree Planting

I am a big advocate for trees. Trees make communities a healthier, more inviting place to live and work. The new Evergreen Cities Program will provide cities and counties with better information



and tools to protect and increase the tree cover in their community. This legislation will identify the best planting sites, how to maintain street trees, how to manage pests with fewer chemicals, and will address using trees to improve storm water management.

Marine Resources

As Chair of the Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation Committee (NROR), one of my areas of focus has been clean up of the Puget Sound and our diverse Washington

coast. Part of this effort has been the formation of Marine Resource Committees (MRCs) in all outer coast counties. The purpose of state MRCs is to bring together local governments, scientific experts, economic interests, recreational and environmental

interests as well as tribes, to cooperatively protect these resources. This is done by utilizing sound science and addressing the needs of the marine ecosystem in those areas. I introduced, and the Legislature passed, Senate Bill 6227. It creates an Outer Coast Marine Resource Committee Program to provide additional support for these outer coast MRCs such as a coordinator from the Department of

Fish and Wildlife as well as grant planning and distribution. Similar to the previous bill I mentioned regarding MRCs, I prime sponsored and the Legislature passed Senate Bill 6231 to improve preservation of our Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). A MPA is any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for wildlife, natural or cultural resources.

Addressing the Housing Market

Housing Trust Fund

Ensuring that all people have affordable housing is one of the best forms of social and economic development. The Legislature provided the Housing Trust Fund with \$50 million more for the construction of new affordable housing, \$10 million to support nonprofit organizations working to create affordable housing, and \$10 million to create a new rapid response loan fund to preserve existing affordable housing and community services.



Regulating Mortgage Brokers

Some people seeking home loans decide to use a mortgage broker, but until now those brokers had no legal responsibility to help borrowers get the best deal. Senate Bill 6381 will make the borrowing process transparent by ensuring

mortgage brokers act in the borrower's best interest, disclosing any compensation they receive from the issuer of the loan, and fully informing borrowers about their options and rights.

Financial Literacy

Last fall, the Governor's Homeowner Security Task Force analyzed the national mortgage crisis and made recommendations for protecting our citizens. Acting on these recommendations, the Legislature created a program to provide more financial literacy education and mortgage counseling for new homebuyers and homeowners facing foreclosure.

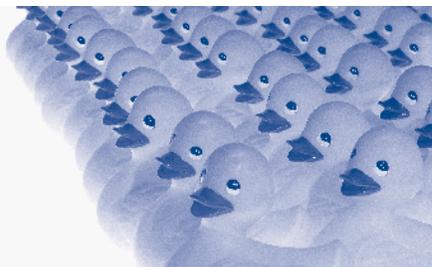
Keeping Families Healthy and Safe

Local Farms, Healthy Kids

Fresh, locally-grown foods are generally healthier for people and less of an impact on the environment. Children, particularly those from



low-income families, often don't get enough fresh foods. Senate Bill 6483 makes it easier and practical for schools, food banks, and participants in the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program to incorporate fresh local food into their meal plans.



Toxic Toys

Last summer, manufacturers recalled millions of toys containing lead paint. Elevated levels of lead, cadmium, or phthalates have been shown to cause the following problems: developmental disabilities, reproductive problems,

learning disabilities, hormone problems, and sometimes cancer in children. This session we passed House Bill 2647 restricting the manufacture or knowing sale of children's products containing more than the stated amounts of lead, cadmium, or phthalates.

Tighter Sex Offender Laws

Everyone should feel safe from physical harm in their homes, schools, and communities. The state budget provides \$5 million more for tracking and monitoring sex offenders, funds for more services for victims and communities including \$600,000 for medical and therapeutic services for child victims of sexual assault, \$1 million for emergency planning on college campuses, and funds for five additional academies to train an additional 150 law enforcement officers.

Additional Achievements



(left) Sen. Jacobsen on a flood tour in Chehalis.

Flood Response Funding

The Natural Resource, Ocean & Recreation Committee (NROR) toured Centralia and Chehalis to assess the flood damage and respond to the needs of the residents. The Legislature provided a \$50 million state match for the federal levee project in Lewis County, which we hope will prevent similar disruption and includes measures to prevent flooding of Interstate 5, \$10 million for housing in the flooded areas, \$2

million to help businesses recover, and funds to study more ecological flood protection measures across the state. As chair of the NROR Committee, I will continue to examine the relationship between clear-cut logging and flooding. Passage of House Bill 2525 eliminates permitting delays for removing obstructions and repairing structures and fish habitat after a flood, while maintaining environmental protections.

The Next Step for Domestic Partners!

Last year, Washington created a registry for Domestic Partners for same sex couples and opposite sex couples where at least one person is 62 or over. This year, House Bill 3104, continues the work by adding about 170 more protections. Governor Gregoire signed the legislation into law on March 12th. I was proud to support this bill.

Your Individual Health Insurance Rates Now Have More Oversight

The majority of people in Washington receive their health insurance through

their employer. Those who do not may purchase insurance individually, but the premiums aren't always affordable. To address this issue, we gave the Insurance Commissioner the authority to reject rates in the individual insurance market if they are seen as unreasonable compared to the benefits provided. This key consumer protection bill is the response to the double digit increases in health care premiums.

Tax Relief for Those in Need: Working Families Tax Credit

Washington has one of the most regressive tax structures in the

country—making life difficult for many low-income working families. This session, the Legislature implemented a new program to return some of the state sales tax to low-wage working people who qualify for the federal earned income tax credit. The 'Working Families Tax Credit' will lighten the unfair tax burden on low-wage working people and, depending on family size, could put up to \$235 back in their pockets. Over 5,500 working residents in our district will qualify for the rebate once the program is up and running.



Airline Passenger Bill of Rights

My own experience of sitting on an airplane runway for hours inspired Senate Bill 6269. I realized passengers do not have a lot of basic rights. As the law stands now, passengers have no recourse when airlines leave them stranded, lose their luggage, or make them sit on a tarmac for hours without food or water. Kate Hanni, with the National Coalition for an Airline Passengers Bill of Rights, testified in favor of the bill I prime sponsored which provides airline passengers with assurances of food, water, ventilation, and operable sanitary facilities. Because of heavy lobbying by the airline industry, the bill did not pass. I will bring it back next year.

520 Bridge

This session we dedicated \$2 billion to continue work on replacing the SR 520 floating bridge and to improve Highway 520 between I-5 and I-405. In trying to move towards consensus on a bridge design, mediation between the Department of Transportation and area community groups have been quite active. I have



been asked to serve on the 520 Mediation Oversight Committee. While a final design plan has not been agreed upon, it is certain a feasible plan must address how best to mitigate congestion, incorporate mass transit, and protect the ecosystem in this area. The community has been very instrumental in the decision of what the new 520 will look like. Furthermore, I supported legislation this past session, which was enacted into law, that requires prior legislative approval before any tolls may be imposed on SR 520. No decision has been made regarding tolling SR 520.

Education and Job Training

- **Reaching Students in Need:** Students who are struggling in school need our focused attention. The state budget funded a targeted outreach program to find and provide more supportive learning opportunities for students who aren't on track to graduate.
- **Apprenticeships and Training Programs:** Training young people for jobs in growing industries will benefit them, their families, and the entire state. This year, the state dedicated \$8 million for apprenticeships in aerospace and new technology, construction trades, and health care.

Recognizing our Veterans this Session

- **Veteran's Conservation Corps:** Many military veterans will be looking for work and ways to integrate back into the community when they return from duty. I fought hard to create the Veteran's Conservation Corps back in 2006. This year I won another \$250,000 to contribute to this program. This is a win-win situation—veterans will be able to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of nature, and forestry related jobs will be filled.
- **High School Diplomas:** School districts now have the authority to issue high school diplomas to all honorably discharged veterans who left high school before graduation to serve during the Vietnam era.
- **Property Tax Relief:** Federal veterans' benefits awarded for service-connected disability can be deducted from their disposable income total when computing the retired person property tax reduction.

- **Military Employee Pay Dates:** State active duty payments shall be no later than seven days after the duty is completed for National Guard and Washington State Guard.
- **Family Military Leave Act:** The Family Military Leave Act allows employees who are married to a member of the U.S. armed forces to take up to fifteen days off unpaid leave while their military spouse is on rest-and-recreation leave during deployment of 12

months or longer on a combat tour.

- **Taps at Veteran's Funerals:** The playing of taps at the funeral of a veteran is a final display of respect and admiration for those who served our country. I proposed a bill to ensure a live performance of taps, by an actual human bugler, at every veteran's funeral in Washington. This bill did not get all the way through the legislative process this year, but I will push for it again next year.

Schools Visit Olympia

I was proud to host groups from local schools this year at the Legislature. Students from Seattle Jewish Community School, King's Elementary, Wedgwood Elementary, Assumption St. Bridget School, and Fairview Christian School visited the Capitol Building, saw the Legislature in action, and learned more about their state government. The students from Wedgwood were so inspired, they proposed their own bill to declare the Olympic Marmot the official endemic mammal of Washington state.



Thank You to Our Great 2008 Intern and Pages!

Each session, the Senate Internship Program offers Washington's college and university students the experience of working in the Legislature. This year my intern, Korbie Vicklund, was very instrumental in the drafting of three bills slated for the upcoming 2009 session. I'm very excited about Senate Bill 6954, 6955 and

6956 that support small, local livestock farming. I was impressed by both Korbie's enthusiasm and job performance. Thanks, Korbie – way to go!

Know of a student interested in working the 2009 legislative session as an intern? Contact Judi Best, Senate Internship Coordinator, at 360-786-7451.

Would you like to be a legislative page? If you will be 14-16 years old during the legislative session that starts next January, and are interested in witnessing state government first-hand, contact my office for details or download an application at: www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/studentspage.

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