

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)



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SENATORS

Randi Becker
 John Braun, *Chair*
 Sharon Brown
 Annette Cleveland
 David Frockt
 Bob Hasegawa
 Mark Mullet, *Assistant Secretary*
 Ann Rivers

REPRESENTATIVES

Jake Fey
 Larry Haler
 Christine Kilduff
 Drew MacEwen
 Ed Orcutt, *Secretary*
 Gerry Pollet
 Derek Stanford, *Vice Chair*
 Drew Stokesbary

April 20, 2016

JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Senator Braun, JLARC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
- *Chair Braun called for a motion to approve the January 6, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion was seconded and carried unanimously. (See TVW recording at [0:00:17](#)).*
- The Chair indicated that a vote is in order for JLARC's updated 2015-17 Audit Work Plan. Legislative Auditor Keenan Konopaski discussed changes made during the 2016 legislative session, including the addition of several new studies and expansions to existing studies for this and future biennia, as well as some minor technical changes. *Chair Braun called for a motion to approve the updated 2015-17 Audit Work Plan. Representative Kilduff made a motion. Motion was seconded and carried unanimously. (See TVW recording at [0:00:38](#))*

REPORTS, PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS

Chair Braun reminded the Committee that they heard the preliminary report for Unemployment Training Benefits in January 2016 and that there were a number of questions raised during that meeting. He indicated that staff have summarized the questions and answers from the preliminary presentation in a document included in today's committee meeting materials.

Unemployment Insurance Training Benefits Study—Proposed Final Report

Legislative Auditor's Conclusion: Most Training Benefits Program participants complete retraining, but the Program has not always improved participants' employment or earnings

Ryan McCord and Zane Kelly of JLARC staff presented the Proposed Final Report. The Employment Security Department's (ESD) Training Benefits Program provides additional unemployment benefits to eligible workers while they train for high-demand occupations. Most Training Benefits Program participants complete training for new occupations, but the Program has not always improved participants' employment or earnings. There are also opportunities for the ESD to improve administration of the Program. The Legislative Auditor recommends that ESD should prepare a plan to identify reasons why outcomes improve for some training benefits participants and not others, and determine whether there are opportunities to change the Program to improve outcomes for all participants. The Legislative Auditor also recommends that ESD develop a plan and associated cost estimate to improve its administration of the Training Benefits Program, to include: improving the application form, improving guidance to its Program

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partners, improving the timeliness of its decisions, establishing quality assurance review, and improving its performance measures. (See TVW recording at [00:04:50](#)).

Chair Braun invited representatives from the Employment Security Department to respond to the report and Member questions. Gene Walker, Special Programs Manager, and Gustavo Aviles, Manager, Program Evaluation, Research & Analysis, commented on the report and responded to questions. (See TVW recording at [00:29:25](#)).

A motion was made to approve for distribution the proposed final report. The motion was seconded and carried. (See TVW recording at [00:47:15](#))

Chair Braun indicated that the next series of brief presentations are for studies that will be completed and presented in coming months. (See TVW recording at [00:48:16](#))

Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities—Scope and Objectives

John Bowden of JLARC staff presented the proposed Scope and Objectives for this study. In 2006, the Legislature created the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (SSB 6197). The legislation identified the work to be done by the Council and directed JLARC to review the Council and its functions. The review will identify the extent to which the Council has complied with legislative intent, operated efficiently and economically, achieved expected performance goals and targets, and duplicates the activities of another agency or the private sector. Staff plan to present the preliminary report in September 2016. (See TVW recording at [48:24](#)).

Puget Sound Partnership —Scope and Objectives

Melanie Stidham and Amanda Eadrick of JLARC staff presented the proposed Scope and Objectives for this study. In 2007, the Legislature created the Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) and charged it with coordinating and leading the effort to restore and protect Puget Sound by 2020. This study will evaluate the Partnership's performance in their key responsibilities and follow-up on previous audit findings. Specifically, the study will identify what progress has been made in restoring Puget Sound by 2020, whether restoration efforts and expenditures across the Puget Sound are tracking with the Partnership's priorities and strategic initiatives, how the Partnership is meeting key oversight and accountability requirements, whether there are any barriers to implementing the Partnership's Action Agenda, and how the Partnership is utilizing monitoring and adaptive management to update its Action Agenda. Staff will present its preliminary report in January 2017. (See TVW recording at [57:25](#)).

Forest Fire Protection Assessments —Scope and Objectives

Ryan McCord of JLARC staff presented the proposed Scope and Objectives for this study. The study will review Forest Fire Protection Assessment fees imposed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to support fire protection activities on non-federal forest lands. The review will identify how DNR and counties collect the assessments, whether collection processes are efficient and consistent with statute, how DNR and local fire districts define their fire protection areas, and what practices and rate setting standards are used by other states for assessments. Staff will present the preliminary report in July 2017. (See TVW recording at [01:04:20](#)).

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Alternative Process for UW Medical Facility Construction Projects: Sunset Review — Scope and Objectives

Stephanie Hoffman and Steven Meyeroff of JLARC staff presented the proposed Scope and Objectives for this study. The University of Washington (UW) is authorized to use an alternative process for awarding contracts to construct, remodel, or improve facilities used for critical patient care or highly specialized medical research. Because this alternative process is scheduled to sunset in July 2017, JLARC staff are conducting a second sunset review of the program. The review will identify the extent to which the program has complied with legislative intent and met its performance targets, and will follow up on three recommendations made in the 2014 sunset review of the program. Staff will present the preliminary report in September 2016. (See TVW recording at [01:09:21](#)).

Other Discussion

Keenan Konopaski, Legislative Auditor, recognized JLARC staff member Linda Byers, who is retiring after a long career with the Washington State Legislature. (See TVW recording at [1:17:10](#)).

Chair Braun reminded the Committee of today's JLARC I-900 Subcommittee Public Hearing on SAO's performance audit on Prison Safety in Senate Hearing Room 4 at 1:30 p.m.

With no further business before the Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

ATTENDANCE

JLARC Members Present: Senators Randi Becker, John Braun, David Frockt, Bob Hasegawa, Mark Mullet; Representatives Jake Fey, Christine Kilduff, Ed Orcutt, Gerry Pollet, Derek Stanford and Drew Stokesbary.

JLARC Staff Present: Keenan Konopaski, Legislative Auditor; John Bowden, Linda Byers, Ashley Elliott, Stephanie Hoffman, Zane Kelley, Ryan McCord, Steven Meyeroff, Marilyn Richter, Emily Schroeder, Molly Spiller, Melanie Stidham, Liz Thomas, Valerie Whitener, and John Woolley.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

CHAIR

VICE CHAIR