



2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION—WAWG WRAP-UP

Members of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers,

The 2020 Legislative session has come to a close, concluding its intense 60-day session on time. The session began focusing on homelessness, housing and transportation in light of voter-approved \$30 car tabs. However, the final days of the session were dominated by fears about the potential economic fallout from COVID-19. These fears led lawmakers to cut spending in their supplemental operating budget. The final budget adds just over \$1 billion in new spending to the \$52.4 billion, two-year budget passed by lawmakers last April, includes no new taxes (although earlier in session the Legislature increased B&O taxes for certain businesses) and leaves \$3 billion in total reserves at the end of the biennium.

Highlights of legislation tracked closely by WAWG:

Low Carbon Fuel Standard ([E2SHB 1110](#)) authorizing the Department of Ecology to enact a low carbon fuel standard. WAWG opposed this legislation because other states implementing an LCFS have seen their fuel prices significantly rise with little environmental benefit.

Cap and Trade ([SB 5981](#)). This legislation would have required Ecology to implement a greenhouse gas emissions cap and trade program to achieve the state's GHG emission reduction limits. There are likely going to be interim discussions on this issue and a renewed effort by the proponents of this to reintroduce this idea next session. WAWG opposed, but will engage in interim discussions on this issue.

DNR Lease Terminations ([SHB 2498](#)), sponsored by Rep. Corry. WAWG supported. This bill would have required DNR to compensate lessees in the event that DNR terminate a state land lease for agricultural or grazing purposes. Although the bill passed the House unanimously, the bill stalled in the Senate. **WAWG appreciates the efforts of Rep. Corry and DNR's support on this bill. WAWG will work to bring this legislation forward again in 2021.**

Chlorpyrifos Regulation ([E2SSB 6518](#)). This bill originally banned most chlorpyrifos use unless it was exempted and also created an emergency permit process. It was amended in the House to remove the ban, exemptions, and emergency permit process on chlorpyrifos in favor of giving WSDA emergency rulemaking authority for controls on chlorpyrifos to prevent public exposures (rules to take effect by January 1, 2022.). WAWG opposed the original version of the bill, but supported the final version because whether to ban such a pesticide is more appropriate as part of rulemaking based on science. Bill delivered to Governor.

Minimum Crew Size ([HB 1841](#)), sponsored by Rep. Riccelli. WAWG opposed. This bill establishes minimum crew size requirements on trains transporting hazardous and non-hazardous material. The bill would require a minimum crew size of two for common carrier and passenger trains. The final legislation exempted shoreline railroads (Class III railroads) from the crew size requirement when traveling under twenty-five miles per hour. This issue is likely to get litigated over federal preemption issues. Bill delivered to Governor.

Soil Health Initiative ([SSB 6306](#)). WAWG supported. The bill creates the Soil Health Initiative as a jointly administered project by WSU, WSCC, and WSDA in order to improve agricultural viability, food nutrition, and environmental functions by better focusing research on soil health and soil biology. It requires a progress report to the legislature by October 1, 2020. Bill delivered to Governor.

Special Purpose District Elections ([SHB 2415](#)). WAWG opposed. The bill would have changed qualified electors from landowners in the district to registered voters residing in the district. This would have disenfranchised numerous landowners/farmers who do not reside in the district or have organized their farms as partnership, LLC or other corporate entities. Non-natural "persons" currently vote in irrigation district elections but they, obviously, can't register to vote.

[Link to WAWG Bill Tracker](#)