



Ambassador Update

With a resounding gong of the bell, the Washington State Legislature dismissed session, called Sine Die, at midnight on Monday, April 27, 2009.



There is talk about the Legislature being called back to a special session to continue working on a few bills that were not resolved during this session due to the focus on resolving the budget crisis. The Governor would be responsible for calling the Legislature back to Olympia. At this point, she favors just a one-day session to focus solely on these bills, but the date is not determined. An agenda is not set either, but the bills that would likely be worked on further in a special session would:

- allow some school districts to seek additional property taxes from voters.
- allow the Department of Corrections to deport illegal immigrants convicted of felonies.

The last week of April, the *Electric Ambassador* program sent an Action Alert to its email *Ambassadors* asking them to contact BPA to express concerns about the potential rate increases from giving discounted power to certain industrial clients. *Thank you to ALL of the Ambassadors who responded so quickly!*

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Volume 11
Issue 5
Apr/May
2009

AMBASSADOR UPDATE



Live From Olympia

Post-Session WRAP-UP

In this issue:

- Climate Change (SB 5735)
- Amending the RPS (SB 5840)
- Revising the EPS (HB 2129)

What's happening at the state capitol?

In one of the toughest sessions in Washington State's history, Legislators toiled until the wee hours on many evenings as session deadline approached. Due to the budget crisis and the need to close a \$9 billion gap in next year's state budget, many bills ended up "dying" this session.

Many of the proposals that were considered this year and did not make it out of the Legislature before Sine Die, will likely be seen again in coming years. Though with a special session in the works, and no set agenda, its *possible*, though not probable, that there could be a last minute revival of any of these "dead" proposals.

Climate Change (SB 5735)

At a time of economic uncertainty, the Legislature was hesitant to pass any bills that had a new fiscal note attached. Some groups are disappointed that the Governor's proposed climate change bill, **Senate Bill (SB) 5735** did not pass this session.



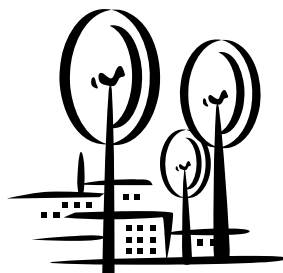
Washington Rural Electric Coop Association members are relieved to see that this was shelved for further discussion, because there were some serious concerns we had with the costs of implementing the plan.

In the meantime, in the Nation's capitol, talks around a federal climate change bill have slowed a little with every report that comes out furthering underlining the deep recession our country is in.

Amending the RPS (SB 5840)

Three years ago, a voter-initiative passed in Washington State creating a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) for utilities. Many electric cooperatives were exempt, but those with over 25,000 meters, like Peninsula Light Company in Gig Harbor, are subject to comply beginning in 2012.

Though **SB 5840** passed through the Senate, and eventually out of the House (just narrowly), Senate would not concur on the revisions made in the House. With only a week before session ended, the House and Senate tried, but were unable to come to an agreement in time. In the end this bill that included the amendments to the RPS that WRECA was seeking died in the last week of session. The amendments were technical fixes to the law and would have made it more cost-effective to meet the standards. It is disappointing for co-ops like PenLight that are faced with increases in the cost doing business associated with complying with the RPS.



Revising the EPS (HB 2129)



In 2007 the Legislature passed SB 6001 creating an Emission Performance Standard for Washington State.

At the time WRECA opposed the bill because it did not classify contracts with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for clean hydropower as being in compliance with the performance standards mandated.

This session the Legislature passed **House Bill (HB) 2129** that included several amendments to the EPS. It is currently with the Governor for her signature. **HB 2129** corrects some of the original bill language and provisions. WRECA was successful in obtaining an exemption for BPA contracts. In addition the bill allows long-term contracts to include up to 12 percent of unspecified resources in the portfolio. And last, but certainly not least, WRECA is happy to see the Legislature recognize the importance of local control—the bill includes a provision that authorizes electric cooperative's elected boards to approve long-term contracts that are not with BPA and that are not in compliance with EPS requirements IF utility members were to be impacted by extraordinary costs to be in compliance.