



# Ambassador Update

The Washington State Legislature convened on January 11, 2010 in Olympia for a 60-day session. Already there have been a staggering amount of bills introduced in just the first weeks.

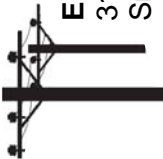


Balancing the budget is going to be a tremendous challenge this session. Coming to agreement on deep cuts to services will not be easy. Bills that would generate revenue are generating buzz - everything from taxing candy and bottled water to legalizing and taxing marijuana sales are being considered to bridge the gap between revenues and expenses that has widened to a \$2.6 billion budget deficit.

Please turn your attention inside to a read about a few bills that the Electric Ambassador program and the Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association (WRECA) are following closely. Also, there is a good chance that the Electric Ambassador program will call its Ambassadors to action this session so stay tuned!

Thank you for your continued support to help keep power reliable and affordable in Washington State! If you have any questions, please contact us at [info@electricambassadors.com](mailto:info@electricambassadors.com)!

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**AMBASSADOR  
UPDATE**



# Live From Olympia

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# What's happening at the state capitol?

Tuesday, February 16 will be the first big cutoff day in the 2010 Legislative Session. By then bills have to pass out of the House of Origin (the House to the Senate or the Senate to the House) to remain "alive." The next cut-off will be on Friday, March 5, which is the last day to consider bills that have passed into the opposite house. Remaining bills will be given a final review before session adjourns on March 11.

## New Net Metering Not Needed

Early in session **House Bill (HB) 2471** was introduced that would amend existing net-metering laws in an effort to incentivize generators. The bill has passed out of committee with many revisions to the original proposal. WRECA does not support this bill because the current law already provides customer-generators with plenty of opportunities and it is unnecessary legislation. Increasing the incentives for a customer-generator at the expense of other members is not reasonable.

## FITs Erode Local Control

**HB 2536** was introduced in the Technology, Energy and Communications Committee. It would establish feed-in tariffs (FITs) on certain types of distributed generation. FITs require a utility to pay a set price - usually several times the cost of power currently paid by a utility - for the electricity generated. WRECA does not support this

bill because it would force the entire membership of an electric cooperative to subsidize the payments to generators and remove control to set rates from the local governing board, which does not support the principles of a co-op. So far there hasn't been a lot of action and it looks like this bill doesn't have the votes to make it out of committee.

## RPS Revisions

This session WRECA would like to obtain several important changes to the RPS statute that was passed in 2006 by voter-initiative. The amendments that WRECA seeks would make it easier and more cost-effective for co-ops to comply with the statute using a combination of renewable energy purchases, renewable energy credits, and conservation efforts. **HB 3034 and SB 6672** are not currently supported by WRECA at this time due to the increase in the percentages of renewable resource purchases required without any added benefit to the co-ops that are affected, but WRECA and its member co-ops will continue to work for an agreeable solution. Unfortunately, at press time it looks as if the revisions we are seeking will not be realized in 2010. We'll continue to report on this important issue if either bill makes it past cut-off.

## GHG Reporting to DOE

The state Department of Ecology's "agency request" bill—**HB 2545** would amend the greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting

requirements to bring Washington's more in line with the federal government's. WRECA supports the current draft of this bill.

## Hydropower as a Renewable!

The northwest region is the beneficiary of access to low-cost, clean and renewable hydropower. Unfortunately, the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard that mandates renewable energy purchases for most utilities in the state does not recognize hydropower purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration as a renewable resource. Yet the state of California's RPS (considered to be more aggressive) recognizes this same hydropower as renewable. This leaves some Washington utilities having to forego a percentage of their low-cost hydropower and replace it with defined renewable resources which cost much more, while California utilities are able to purchase any surplus hydropower from BPA to meet their RPS. **HB 2432** would correct this inequity making any BPA-generated hydropower eligible for our RPS.

## E-mail Saves Money & Time

Bills move fast in Olympia, so we need to reach you quickly to contact state legislators. Please send your e-mail address, name and electric co-op to [info@electricambassadors.com](mailto:info@electricambassadors.com) to help us be more effective in Olympia, and save money on printing and postage, as well!