



Ambassador Update

The Washington State Legislature adjourned sine die on time Thursday, March 13, 2008. This is the final edition of *Live From Olympia* in 2008. Inside we cover all of the bills that passed that will impact rural electric cooperatives (co-ops).

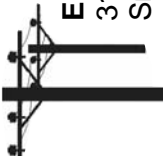


Thousands of bills were introduced in this short 60-day session. Only 4 of the 24 bills that the Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association (WRECA) monitored passed both the House and the Senate and were sent to Governor Chris Gregoire's office for her signature.

Most importantly, thank you! Many of the Electric Ambassador Action Alert Team members were able to reach out to their legislators when our statewide trade association's lobbyist called for help at the last minute with the Senate's amendments to the supplemental operations budget. If you would like to join our Action Alert Team, send your email address with your name and utility to info@electricambassadors.org.

That's a wrap! *Live from Olympia* will pick up again January 2009 to keep you informed about what's happening in the state capital. We appreciate your support - your voice is so important to the success of electric co-ops in Washington State.

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**AMBASSADOR
UPDATE**



Live From Olympia

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What's happening at the state capitol?

Climate Change

House Bill (HB) 2815 was signed into law by the Governor on March 13, 2008. This bill will implement a greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting program for large emitters and will design a carbon dioxide (CO₂) cap-and-trade program in coordination with the regional plan being developed by the Western Governors Association's Western Climate Initiative (WCI).

Even though the concerns that WRECA and its member co-ops expressed about **HB 2815** were not completely addressed, after much lobbying, language was added to the supplemental operations budget bill (**HB 2687**) that will help provide direction to Washington's WCI representatives so that WRECA's issues are considered. Most importantly as a cap-and-trade program is being developed, we need to make sure co-ops are recognized for already being clean and green. The bill is awaiting the Governor's signature.

RE Developers

HB 2639 was delivered to the Governor to await her signature on March 12, 2008. WRECA supported this bill that will allow state entities, such as public utility districts (PUDs), to participate in limited liability corporations (LLC) with for-profit entities and non-state entities, such as not-for-profit electric co-ops when financing the development of renewable resources. This bill seeks to encourage and support development of renewable energy resources in Washington State.

Aquatic Land Easements

Another bill that WRECA supported is awaiting the approval of the Governor. **HB 1623** will allow applicants the option to select a lease term of less than 30 years and will modify the fee structure and extend the ability of the state to provide easements on state-owned aquatic lands. This was an important bill for some of the co-ops in our state, especially Orcas Power and Light Cooperative in the San Juan Islands to continue to provide reliable electric service to its members.

Pole Attachments

Also on the Governor's desk is **HB 2533**. It will establish a formula for the fees that PUDs charge cable and telephone providers to attach wires and equipment on the utility's power poles. Electric co-ops were exempted from the bill.

Dead for 2008

Both HB 1032 and HB 3216 could not make it out of House Rules after clearing the House and Senate before sine die. **HB 1032** would have authorized all electric and natural gas utilities to collect a monthly system benefits charge from all of their retail electricity and natural gas customers to establish a fund to be used to reduce the cost of deploying distributive generation projects. **HB 3216** would have created a workgroup on kinetic energy and developed recommendations for one-stop permitting.

Senate Bill 6308 got stuck in the Senate Rules committee after clearing both Chambers. It would have required recommendations for the creation of a comprehensive climate change program and created the office of Washington state climatologist.

The "Other" Washington

While session has adjourned in Olympia, things are just starting to heat up in Washington, DC.

Last month rural electric leaders from the Northwest assembled in Anaheim, CA for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA's) annual meeting. NRECA passed a resolution to request that Congress consider hydropower a renewable resource for state and federal Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPSs) to allow it to count as credit towards green power requirements. Washington State passed a voter initiative RPS in 2007, which will be enacted in 2009. It does not recognize hydropower as a renewable resource.

As the debate on how to address climate change continues in cities, states and regions, the federal government is also looking to implement changes to affect global warming and reduce carbon emissions. **S. 2191**, called the "America's Climate Security Act," was introduced by the Senate Committee of Environment and Public Works late in 2007. **S. 2191** would establish a national cap-and-trade program. As this bill progresses, we may be contacting our Electric Ambassadors to reach out to their Congressmen. Stay tuned!