

SENATOR JIM HONEYFORD



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Agriculture, Water & Rural Economic Development - Ranking; Ways & Means - Capital Budget; Energy, Environment & Telecommunications

Halfway to the finish line of the 2013 session

We've passed the middle of the 2013 legislative session, and at this point the most significant deadline was reached on March 13. Known as "floor cutoff," it was the last day most bills could be considered by their body of origin. In other words, all Senate bills considered not necessary to implement the budget had to be passed by the Senate and vice-versa in the House of Representatives.



Under [Majority Coalition Caucus](#) leadership, this year the Senate has been more productive than any other time in the past four years. We passed 276 bills over to the House, many of which were sponsored by members of the minority caucus. We've set the bar high for passing the most bills sponsored by members of the minority in recent history, holding true to the Majority's stated goals of true bipartisanship.

On April 3, our next major deadline arrives. That's the last day to hold public hearings on bills in the opposite body (again, except for those necessary to implement the budget). After that, the Legislature has until April 17 to debate bills in both bodies in preparation for April 28, the last day of the regular session.

We have a lot of work in front of us as well as a budget to pass between now and the end of the legislative session. I am working hard to ensure the 15th District's interests are adequately represented in the Washington State Senate, and thank you for keeping informed on these activities via my Olympia Report e-newsletter.

Status of my bills in the House of Representatives

I am pleased to report the Senate passed 11 of my bills and sent them to the House of Representatives for consideration. Currently, 10 of my 11 bills have public hearings scheduled in

various House Committees.

The most important bill I sponsored this year is [Senate Bill 5445](#) that provides \$445m in grants for school construction and safety upgrades. After passing unanimously off the Senate floor to the House, it remains in the House Capital Budget Committee.

- [Senate Bill 5002](#), concerning how mosquito control districts will operate, received a hearing by the House Committee on Local Government and is waiting to be debated by the full House.
- [Senate Bill 5054](#) addresses how land can be acquired by certain state agencies. It will receive a hearing today in the House Committee on Agricultural and Natural Resources.
- [Senate Bill 5056](#) allows for the application of a permit in order to hire minors. This bill is expected to be recommended by the House Committee on Workforce and Labor Development today.
- [Senate Bill 5132](#) concerns how debt service costs are reported. It has been referred to the House Committee on Appropriations and will hopefully receive a hearing soon.
- [Senate Bill 5219](#) ensures local economies will remain healthy by retaining water resources. The bill has been heard by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources and is awaiting recommendation by that committee.
- [Senate Bill 5324](#) concerning how mosquitos are controlled in storm water retention ponds has also been heard by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources and also is awaiting recommendation.
- [Senate Bill 5400](#) provides utility companies the ability to use other eligible resources to be able to meet energy conservation requirements. It has been heard by the House Committee on the Environment and should be passed today.
- [Senate Bill 5702](#) allows Washington State to better protect itself from invasive aquatic species. The House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources has heard this bill and it is now awaiting passage.
- [Senate Bill 5770](#) provides conservation districts with the ability to use direct deposit to pay their employees. This bill will receive a hearing in the House Committee on Local Government today.
- [Senate Bill 5824](#) modernizes local irrigation district finance regulations and is scheduled for a hearing in the House Committee on Local Government.



If you have interest in any of the bills I have sponsored this year, please do not hesitate to contact me. I want to know what you think about what has been going on here in Olympia.

Revenue forecast shows \$2 billion more

On Wednesday, March 20, the state Economic and Revenue Forecast Council announced we will have nearly two billion additional dollars for the 2013-15 operating budget. This news has been extremely well-received and has strengthened the resolve of the Majority Coalition Caucus to not raise your taxes. Despite reports to the contrary, we are close to reaching a budget compromise that will provide more funding for higher education as well as significantly fund K-12 education to comply with the Supreme Court's McCleary decision.



Here in Olympia, the constant talk of budget cuts has all but evaporated, and we are able to start reprioritizing your tax dollars to focus on what matters most. Some pet programs may not receive the increases they would like, but we are no longer taking money away from vital programs and services. I'll keep you posted on the progress of the 2013-15 budget as it is made public.

Our "10-3-50" plan to reduce tuition and fund higher education

Over the last few years, the state has cut more than 30 percent out of the funding provided for our colleges and universities. Because of those funding cuts, tuition rates are at all-time highs. This past week, the Majority Coalition Caucus rolled out our "10-3-50" plan that will increase funding for our higher education institutions by 10 percent (an additional \$300 million). The plan will also reduce tuition rates by three percent and provide \$50 million in competitive funding for colleges and universities.



We cannot continue to cut the funding for higher education every time we need to balance the state's budget. If we do not lower the cost of higher education, our students will continue to incur debt at a record pace. This is not a fix-all plan, but it starts the conversation about what we need to provide a world-class education to every student, not just those willing to be saddled with debt.

Bridging the gap between unmanned aircraft hype and hysteria

Washington State has always been on the leading edge of the aerospace industry. We set the stage by building the large bombers that helped us win World War Two. Now we are designing and manufacturing some of the smallest aircraft to meet the demands of the future.



Washington-based aerospace companies will be on the Capitol Campus Wednesday, March 27, to demonstrate the latest unmanned aircraft technology. Wednesday's hands-on demonstrations will be led by Dr. Tad McGeer, founder of two industry-leading drone companies based in the Columbia River Gorge. Many other unmanned aircraft-manufacturing companies that provide hundreds of private-sector jobs in Washington will also be represented at the briefing. Attendees will be able to meet one-on-one with engineers and operators, watch onboard video from both daylight and night unmanned aircraft operations and inspect the aircraft and their launching equipment in person.

In closing...

A big priority for me is getting your feedback as often as possible. It is one of the best tools I have to help me better represent you. As always, if you would like to contact me you can write, phone, e-mail, or stop by. It remains my honor to serve you in the Washington State Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim".

Jim Honeyford
State Senator, 15th District

