

Olympia Update

From Senator Curtis King, 14th District



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As your senator, it is my intention to send out e-newsletters periodically throughout the legislative session and perhaps once or twice during the interim. I hope you will find them useful and informative.

I value your privacy and I don't want to send you any unwanted material. However, I hope you will choose to remain on my mailing list as I think you'll find these updates full of pertinent information about state government and our district, much of which could affect you and your family. Please feel free to forward this to a friend or neighbor who you think might be interested in receiving it as well!

Senate transportation budget to be released soon

This session, I am co-chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, and we're responsible for crafting a state transportation budget. Historically, the transportation committee has been one of the more (if not the most) bipartisan, cooperative committees in the Legislature, and this session has been no different. The other co-chair, Democrat Senator Tracy Eide of Federal Way, and I have been working side-by-side to develop the elements of a budget proposal.

Take
the **Survey**

The Senate is first this session to release a transportation budget proposal, and ours will likely be released sometime next week. It will be a bare-bones proposal since the state doesn't have any additional funds to devote to transportation projects. There is reportedly a proposal coming from the House of Representatives that will increase the gas tax by 10-cents per gallon (a 2-cent increase each year for five years). I would appreciate it if you would answer the following four questions:

- *Do you feel our state transportation system is poor, adequate, good, or excellent?*

- *Do you feel that our state transportation system needs more revenue?*
- *Would you support a 10-cent increase in the gas tax?*
- *Does it make a difference to your support if a 10-cent gas tax increase it is spread over five years at 2-cents per year?*

Please [click this link](#) or the image above to take a quick survey to answer these questions and share with me your thoughts about transportation, as it really is the one issue in the state that directly affects every single resident. Thank you for taking the time to respond.

DOT secretary's questionable choice for review leader

Newly-appointed Washington State Department of Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson announced last week that Ron Paananen - now a private consultant - will lead a comprehensive assessment of the [Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement](#), the [State Route 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program](#), and the [Interstate 5 Columbia River Crossing](#) projects. I am concerned about the her choice of a former WSDOT administrator and project director to review these three mega-projects.

“If you want to control the message, then you hire someone who you can control.”

I have no doubt that Mr. Paananen is technically qualified , however Paananen was a former WSDOT administrator on two of these projects and his current private employer receives millions in consulting fees from WSDOT, including current payouts of \$2.4 million on the Columbia River Crossing – one of the projects to be reviewed. This is obviously an enormous conflict of interest.

State taxpayers are potentially out millions of dollars due to serious mistakes made with the 520 bridge project and I don't think hiring a consultant who has been part of these troubled projects to provide an "independent" assessment is the right solution. I believe DOT needs to bring in a truly independent analyst to not only impartially identify where improvements can be made but also instill a modicum of trust among taxpayers that the state transportation department isn't wasting their money. I'll keep you posted on this story.

Two of my bills make their way through the House

Since the Majority Coalition Caucus took control of the Senate in December, I've been able to get several of my bills passed by the Senate and sent to the House of Representatives for consideration. Two of those bills are of particular interest to me and I wanted to share their details with you.

[Senate Bill 5620](#) would change the frequency and type of school emergency drills in Washington. Right now, schools are required to conduct six fire drills and one lockdown drill during the school year. However, there hasn't been a student killed in a school fire since 1956...and there *have* been significant increases in school lockdowns.



My bill would reduce the number of annual fire drills from six to three, and increase the number of lockdown drills from one to three. The focus would be shifted to accommodate the more current threats. SB 5620 passed the Senate unanimously on March 5, and was approved by the House Committee on Education March 26.

[Senate Bill 5692](#) deals with guardianships in Washington. Often a child or adult who meets certain criteria will have a legal guardian as well as a substitute guardian, and my bill would allow the primary guardian to keep the substitute informed in all matters so he or she may take a long-deserved break when necessary. Additionally, if a primary guardian were to pass away then the substitute guardian would be prepared to take that person's place as primary. SB 5692 passed the Senate unanimously on February 28, and is now in the House Committee on Judiciary.

In closing...

Thank you for reading my Olympia Update and I encourage you to [contact me](#) with your thoughts, opinions and concerns about state or district issues. I highly value your opinion and - as always - it remains my honor to serve you in the Washington State Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Curtis King'.

Curtis King
State Senator, 14th District



P.S. If you no longer wish to receive my e-newsletters you can simply unsubscribe by clicking the **Subscriber Preferences** link below.
