

Environmental Lobby Day Agenda Western Washington University, February 2017

Water for People, Farms, and Fish

As human population grows and with this city planning develops, we know with more urgency that communities need innovative solutions for a balanced, reliable, and sustainable water supply. In Washington state, water affects not only people but also wildlife and local ecosystems. In *Whatcom County v. Hirst*, the Supreme Court recently decided that new housing developments cannot move forward if there is no legal and practical access to safe drinking water, or where making drinking water available, such as building wells, will hurt flows in rivers and streams that many habitats depend on.

Washington state needs solutions that will protect fish, local people, and farms. We must hold legislators responsible to protect our most precious resource. The *Hirst* decision should be supported as it requires planning for population growth in a way that protects instream flows and provides long-term reliability to provide safe and clean drinking water to protect our homes, farms, and the creatures who make their homes in streams and rivers.

Supporters: Senator John McCoy

Reducing Toxic Pollution in All Communities

The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) was approved by voters and was established to create administrative processes and standards to identify, investigate and clean up facilities where hazardous substances are found. MTCA has been a successful environmental justice law that is dedicated to cleaning up toxic waste sites, protect water quality due to pollution, and support local communities as they address toxic pollution threats.

Toxic waste sites and superfund sites are often found close to minority communities, including communities with people of color and low-income families. Hazardous waste sites not only affect our environment, but they disproportionately affect communities who need the most protection. MTCA seeks to keep safe and support these communities.

MTCA relies on funding from a hazardous substance tax, which is currently one of the most unreliable revenue sources in Washington state's budget. We urge legislators to help solve a \$75 million shortfall that could stall work in reducing harmful pollution and toxic waste cleanup. We also encourage legislators to impose a tax surcharge to ensure funding is more stable and predictable in the years coming.

Carbon Tax

Climate scientists along with economists have long said that one of the best ways to fight climate change is by putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions, and increase that rate over time. This will encourage the switch to cleaner energy sources which in turn will be beneficial to the environment and create new jobs in clean energy industries. International communities, like British Columbia, Ireland and Sweden, have put carbon taxes in place with much success. Washington state would be the first state in the US to impose a carbon tax.

Washington state needs a strong carbon tax that deals with needs of workers and smoothes transitions towards a renewable energy economy and create an equitable and fair shift. Proceeds from a carbon tax could fund investments in reducing emissions, which is good for all citizens of Washington state. We must raise prices on emissions and make bit emitters pay, and put a share of the investments towards communities that are most burdened by pollution, climate threats and poverty.

Furthermore, Washingtonians are in support of such a bill. Although Initiative 732 failed on the November ballot, groups who were opposed appreciated the intentions of such a campaign. However, it fell short because it did invest directly in renewable energy. A new carbon tax proposal could and should do this, and we want to push legislators in this direction. Carbon taxing benefits all of Washington when it is done with care and intention.

Oil Transportation Safety

Rapid and dramatic changes to oil transportation are creating serious threats to western Washington communities and waterways. Washington's waters face the risk of oil spills on a daily basis and we need to do more to protect the health of people who use Washington's water sources, and the creatures who live in, and around, them. New proposals to move more oil through our state make the threat of oil spills more urgent than ever. We urge legislators to look at recent events, such as the recently approved Kinder Morgan pipeline, which would increase tanker traffic by 700% through the Salish Sea, and realize that Washington state can no longer be a target for such dangerous oil shipments. We are currently under threat for more export terminals, and legislators must take action to protect their constituents.

Legislators must take action to pass legislation that protects the Puget Sound, which covers 2,500 miles of shoreline and 2.1 million acres of submerged saltwater lands, home to many different species.

Furthermore, legislators must ensure sustainable and adequate funding for oil spill response, and be prepared to address and mitigate the risks posed by pipelines.

Protect Oyster Dome

The WA Department of Natural Resources reached an agreement with the state in 2006 that would prevent logging Blanchard Mountain's core. This area includes the Oyster Dome, North Butte and Lily and Lizard lakes. The DNR is mandated to provide revenue for schools and counties through timber sales, and the 2006 agreement requires the State Legislature to provide necessary appropriations to purchase nearby replacement lands that could instead be harvested.

By 2016 the legislature had not completed its half of the agreement. They had only provided funding for \$6.5 million of the \$14.2 million needed to purchase lands that would replace the clearcutting at Blanchard Mountain's core. The funding for this project must be complete by the end of the 2017 legislature, or the DNR will have to begin logging Blanchard's core this summer. \$7.7 million is still needed to protect Blanchard Mountain's core area. Governor Inslee's budget for the 2017 year includes on \$1.5 million for Blanchard, leaving a \$5.7 million shortfall.

We must hold our legislators responsible to the agreement they made with the DNR and advocate for the full \$7.7 million shortfall in the Capital Budget Bill. The 2017 legislative session is the last chance we have to prevent this beautiful, recreational landmark from being undermined. Hikes at Blanchard Mountain are often some of the first and most famous that Western students get to experience. Furthermore, the ecosystems that exist within Blanchard Mountain would be seriously compromised or destroyed if the clearcutting were to happen. The clearcutting of this land would mean the tragic loss of a historical and important area.

Legislators who support the clear cut: Outgoing State Lands Commissioner Peter Goldmark, Incoming State Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz