

## **WASHINGTON FOOD INDUSTRY - LOBBYIST UPDATE – 4/24/09**

Three days left! They still say they are going to get out on time. I'm thinking we should pay them a week's per diem to get out of town!!!

### **BUDGET**

We have heard an agreement has been reached and that the budget will be officially released on 9 a.m. Friday morning.

### **TAXES & FEES:**

**HB 2358** – would increase liquor license fees (Grocery stores would go from \$150/yr to \$166). This bill passed out of the House with only 50 votes in favor (the minimum needed to pass) and it is scheduled for a hearing in Senate Ways and Means tomorrow. The bill is expected to pass and raises approximately \$2 million for the 2009-11 operating budget.

**HB 2377**, a bill that would implement a .3% temporary increase in the sales tax to pay for specific health care programs. This bill has recently been declared dead because it doesn't appear to have the votes to pass out of the House. With three more days left, that might change, but legislators seem pretty adamant that they don't want to take a general tax increase vote.

**SSB 6169** – gives the Department of Revenue greater authority to lien corporate bank accounts. The bill originally allowed corporate officers to be held personally liable for liens but that was removed from the bill. The bill passed the House 52-43 and is on its way to the Governor.

### **OPPOSE SB 5225/ NEUTRAL ON 6167 – Increasing the Felony Theft Threshold:**

This bill is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee after passing the Senate 25-21 (the minimum vote required to pass). It is not a well-loved bill in the House but it does save \$5 million so it is expected to pass out on Saturday. It will have our needed tools in it though.

### **OPPOSE SB 6035 – Retro Bill**

So far, it looks like we may have won this battle.

### **OPPOSE HB 1528 – Worker Privacy: VICTORY!!!!!!**

This bill continues to be talked about but has not moved and still appears to be dead.

### **OPPOSE HB 1402 – Restricting Ex Parte Contact During Workers' Compensation Appeals:**

This bill is now on the Governor's desk and is expected to be signed. However, please send a letter to her or call her to ask for a veto. We need to let her know this is a big deal for business and put some pressure on her not to sign.

**OPPOSE SB 5877/2321 – Liquor Control Board Government Competition and Store Expansion:**

A fight was put up by our friend Rep. Linville to make all of the new liquor stores contract stores only, but she was unable to convince the Senate. This issue will be an interim project for WFI.

**SUPPORT SSB 5963 – Unemployment Insurance Reform for Conformity**

The UI vote keeps being delayed and delayed. Currently, the discussion is that the Senate is at odds over whether to simply not concur on the House amendments as a whole or to take them separately. Many Senators do not want to take four separate votes and want just one while Labor is pushing for four separate votes. The delay may benefit us though because the longer we have to wait the less likely it is that we will face a conference committee on the issue.

**New UI Update:** At the last minute a new bill, HB 2385, was introduced that contained all of the bad things in 5963 that hung in the House but none of the tax changes that business wants. This is clearly a show that if we prevail on 5963, the discussion will not be over next year!

**SUPPORT SB 5834 and HB 2040 – Reforming Beer and Wine Regulations:**

Both bills are officially on their way to the Governor!

**OPPOSE SB 5433 – LOCAL TAX OPTIONS**

The Senate refused to concur and the bill is now in conference committee. We are waiting to hear the results.

**AMEND OR OPPOSE SSB 5531 – CHANGE TO CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT**

Please send a letter to the Governor asking for a veto on this bill.

**OTHER BILL UPDATES:**

**5375 – Climate Change:** This bill, which was originally a very onerous “cap and trade” bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, has been modified to primarily a study. The provision on vehicle miles travelled reductions is still in there but requires a study by regional transportation authorities. Senate has not concurred on the bill yet.

**6158 – Paid Family Leave:** This bill was brought up today on the Senate floor. They hung the amendment to take out the loans from the Supplemental Pension fund in Workers' comp. Then

an amendment that would have repealed the program completely came up and the Senate Democrats asked for a ruling on scope and object (meaning the amendment wouldn't fit under the bill title) to avoid taking a vote on the amendment. As of this writing, the ruling had not come back yet so the bill has not been voted on..