

15TH DISTRICT

2019 SESSION REVIEW

Serving Eastern Yakima County including Selah, Moxee, Wapato, Toppenish, Zillah, Granger, Sunnyside, Grandview and part of Yakima

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It is always nice for us to return home to the district after a long legislative session, but that has never been the case more than it has been this year. The 2019 session was one of the most troubling in recent memories.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have full control of the legislative process, with the House, Senate and Governor's mansion. Democratic lawmakers knew this and came to Olympia with an aggressive big-government agenda that included massive new taxes, assaults on your Second Amendment rights and a Seattle-centric approach to every issue facing the state.

Your 15th District team, of course, came to Olympia this year with a different approach. For one, we believe the Legislature should work for solutions that meet the needs of all of Washington, and not just Seattle. We also believe that raising taxes and expanding the size and scope of government should be a last resort, not a first impulse.

Most importantly, we look at votes and determine our positions based on the common sense, conservative values we share with the men and women we represent in the Yakima Valley. We voted no on tax increases (there were nine total) and on bills that restricted constitutional rights. We voted yes on bills that promoted smaller, smarter government.

When determining our priorities, we thought of you — our constituents, friends and neighbors. With that foundation, we voted to support our veterans, protect our senior citizens, and prioritize funding for mental health, special education, water storage, needed local projects and road improvements. We continue to fight for our shared values, priorities and concerns.

It is always a great honor to represent you in Olympia during the legislative session, or back at home.

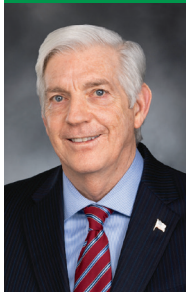
Sincerely,

Jim Honeyford
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Jeremie Dufault
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Toll-free legislative hotline for ALL members: (800) 562-6000

New taxes and bigger government headed your way

What happened this year on the tax-and-spending front was hard to believe. Thanks to the majority Democrats, we will see higher taxes on banks, real estate transactions, small business, travel agents and others, who will ultimately pass those increased costs down to you.

None of this was necessary. The March 2019 revenue forecast was about \$50.55 billion. **That's a \$9 billion increase in expected state revenues in just two years!**

With that kind of increase, we should be giving taxpayers some relief. Instead, the majority party raised taxes by more than \$2 billion over the next four years to support a \$52.8 billion two-year operating budget. This 18 percent increase in state spending is unsustainable and sets us up for a hard road ahead should we experience the economic slowdown experts expect.

There was some good news on taxes!

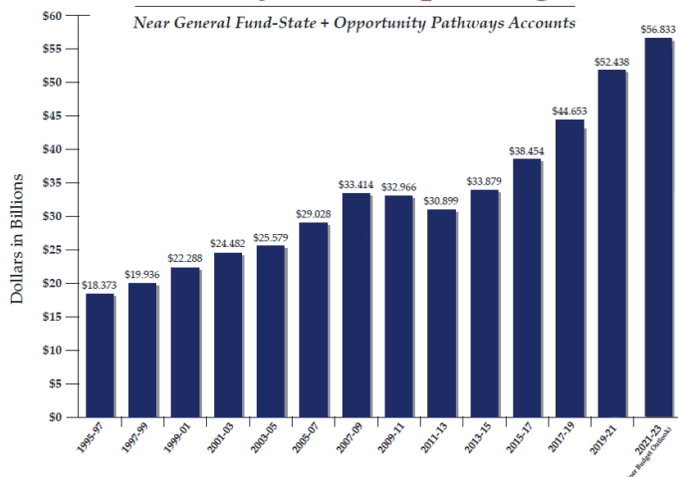
We were able to defeat plans to create a new state income tax! An income tax on capital gains, should it ever pass the Legislature, would almost certainly lead to a general income tax. We were also able to defeat plans for increasing low-carbon fuel standards, which would only further increase the cost of driving. The majority's plan would have imposed a hidden tax on fuel of up to 71 cents a gallon, with no measurable impact on climate change.

Extreme environmental agenda targets rural WA

You can expect higher electric bills and higher fuel prices as a result of tough new environmental policies enacted this year. Coal and natural gas generation will be phased out, with nothing that can reliably take their place. Urban lawmakers also approved a \$750,000 study of destroying the Snake River dams, despite repeated federal studies that have shown little benefit and much economic devastation, particularly in Eastern Washington.

Part of the majority's massive tax package was a \$173 million tax on petroleum products that targets our agriculture community and essentially represents a continuation of the war on rural Washington. This new tax, which will cost up to \$1.1 billion over the next decade, will result in higher fuel prices, which will especially hurt those who have to drive long distances. It will be like another gas tax on drivers, without any benefit to roads. Republicans introduced several amendments to soften the proposal's negative impacts. One amendment sought to preserve an exemption for crop protection products, which would have aided our local growers, but majority Democrats rejected this common sense amendment, along with the others offered by our side.

History of state spending



New and increased taxes

- A new business and occupation (B&O) surcharge on certain service industries, including health care, law, finance, media, and engineering, representing a 20 percent increase in taxes owed. In addition, certain advanced computing businesses will see a B&O tax increase.
- A graduated Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) increase. The higher the price of the home, the higher the tax.
- A tax on petroleum products that will increase the price of fuel. See *Extreme environmental* article to the left.
- An increased tax on banks.
- A new payroll tax to fund new long-term care services that many may never use.
- Levy-lift legislation that goes against the state Supreme Court's McCleary decision resulting in higher property taxes and assuring a McCleary 2.0 lawsuit in the future.

2019 Session Tax Increases

Tax Tally				
(Dollars in Millions)				
	Bill	2 year	4 year	10 year
Property Tax	ESSB 5313	\$1,422	\$2,976	\$8,661
Payroll Tax	2SHB 1087	-	\$1,298	\$8,036
B&O Services	E2SHB 2158	\$428	\$1,041	\$3,098
MTCA	ESSB 5993	\$173	\$375	\$1,103
Graduated REET	ESSB 5998	\$245	\$601	\$1,747
Banks	SHB 2167	\$133	\$339	\$1,036
Int. Investment Services	ESB 6016	\$59	\$125	\$368
Non-Residents	ESSB 5997	\$54	\$113	\$312
Vaping	E2SHB 1873	\$17	\$57	\$207
Travel Agents	ESSB 6004	\$5	\$10	\$28
Total		\$2,536	\$6,935	\$24,596

* Prop Tax = Increase in K-12 Max Levy Authority

New Honeyford-sponsored law will protect the privacy of gun owners

Many proposals affecting Second Amendment rights were introduced this session. One that passed was a bill allowing police to temporarily confiscate weapons without due process.



Fortunately, several bills placing burdensome new restrictions on law-abiding gun owners were defeated this year, including a measure that would have imposed a costly and unnecessary training requirement on holders of concealed pistol licenses.

Gun owners will be happy to learn that Sen. Honeyford was able to gain passage of Senate Bill 6025 – a measure he sponsored to protect some gun owners from public disclosure of their identity and harassment. Because of legislation passed last year to have the state buy back bump stocks, gun owners' personal information was put at risk of being released to the public via public records requests. Honeyford's bill carves out a specific exemption from public records requests for these law-abiding gun owners.

The bill cleared the Legislature in the final hours of the session. It passed the Senate 39-7, and in the House with a vote of 97-1.

Honeyford's Water Infrastructure Program receives Senate hearing

This year, Sen. Honeyford took another major step forward with his proposal to adopt comprehensive water legislation. Senate Bill 5136, which received a hearing before the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee this year, would create a grant program through Ecology to fund water-infrastructure projects for water supply, flood control, fish passage, and storm water. If adopted, the measure would have funded the program to the tune of \$500 million each biennium, up to a total of \$5 billion, paid for out of the capital budget.

At the hearing, a member of the Washington State Potato Commission testified in support of the bill, saying that Honeyford's bill would create a venue for much-needed funding for projects to update deep well systems in poor condition. Tom Davis, director of government relations at the Washington State Farm Bureau, testified that the bill would help make improvements to water infrastructure that would "benefit our generations to come."

While the bill did not move forward this year, Sen. Honeyford was pleased to see the measure gain support, and he will be working hard for good water policy again next session.

Honeyford's bill to give tax relief to mushroom growers receives public hearing

This year, Sen. Honeyford sponsored Senate Bill 5979 to grant a five-year sales tax exemption for the materials, equipment and labor to build a new mushroom farm facility. The measure, which received a hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, would assist mushroom growers like Ostrom's Mushroom Farms, which plans to build a \$25 million facility in Sunnyside.

Ostrom's announced it plans to hire 200 people to work at the new Sunnyside plant, with average wages at about \$40,000 a year.

While Sen. Honeyford's bill did not pass this year, he plans to continue the effort next year.



Ostrom's Mushrooms, south of Lacey, Washington. The company has run out of room to grow there, its president said, and plans to open a new, 43-acre site in Sunnyside, Yakima County, by the end of the year. (Tony Overman / The Olympian)

Chandler bill will make '5G' more accessible and affordable

This session, Rep. Chandler sponsored House Bill 1594 in response to the ongoing installation of next-generation wireless broadband. Currently, the installation of 5G technology is taking place on existing utility poles that fall under certain permitting and inspection rules. Chandler's bill clarifies the terminology and rules between electrical equipment and communications equipment, including who can do what work on a utility pole. The result will make 5G technology more accessible and affordable, and more readily available to consumers. HB 1594 unanimously passed both the House and Senate, and signed into law by Gov. Inslee in April.

Working to make government more efficient and accountable

Under legislation proposed by Chandler, the state of Washington would save money by altering how it procures information technology (IT) products and services. House Bill 1844 would require the state to use "modular contracting" when procuring IT products and services. Modular contracting is an acquisition strategy designed to break up large, complex procurements into multiple tightly-scoped projects that are procured in increments to implement IT systems in successive, interoperable segments.



Page program provides opportunity for Washington teens

Since 1891, the Washington Legislature has been proud to offer high school students the opportunity to work at the statehouse while lawmakers are in session. The House and Senate page programs give youths age 14 to 16 a chance to see their Legislature in action, while they carry messages between offices and monitor action on the chamber floors. The page programs offer excellent preparation for those considering careers in the public arena.

We are honored to sponsor local youths who wish to serve as pages, and we are taking applications for the 2020 session. Application forms and additional information can be found at www.leg.wa.gov/House/pages/Housepageprogram.aspx and at www.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Administration/PageProgram/Pages/default.aspx.

AG ALERT: Bills affecting Ag Community become law

While many bad bills came through the Legislature this year – including an extremely offensive bill sponsored by a Seattle Democrat mandating farmers to report their “slaves” – there were a few good ones. Overall, success on agricultural issues was a mixed bag. Here is a quick rundown on a few bills:

SB 5959 – Livestock identification.

Increases the number of members on the Livestock Identification Advisory Committee from six to 12. Changes certain types of fees for livestock inspection, feedlot and public market certification, and brand recording. Specifies certain provisions for brand record renewal and transfer. Creates a certified livestock inspector program. Provides for the expansion of the use of the Electronic Cattle Transaction Reporting System. Passed Legislature and signed into law.

SB 5330 – Analyzing regulatory impact on small forest landowners. The School of Environmental and Forest Sciences at the University of Washington must complete a trends analysis and report for the stated purpose of analyzing the state regulatory impact on small forest landowners (SFLO). The work group must include recommendations to improve retention of working forestland held by SFLOs. Passed the Legislature and signed into law.



SB 5597 – Aerial herbicide application.

Establishes a legislative work group to study and, if appropriate, provide recommendations regarding the aerial application of herbicides on state and private forestlands. Requires the legislative work group to report its findings, recommendations, and any draft legislation to the governor and the Legislature by Dec. 31, 2019. Passed the Legislature and signed into law.

HB 2047 – Carbon sequestration on natural and working lands. Would have directed the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a more complete inventory of carbon on natural and working lands. The DNR and the Office of the Governor would have been required to form an advisory group to advise the state on ways to effectively advance and accelerate carbon sequestration throughout the state. **Fortunately, we were able to kill this bad bill.**

HB 1983 – Natural resources management. Would have authorized the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to use the best available land management techniques to manage acquired lands, and requires WDFW to develop mitigation actions where appropriate. Would have allowed WDFW to use specific land management techniques without preparing an environmental impact statement. **Unfortunately, this good bill died.**

Dufault mental health bill receives governor's signature

The governor recently signed Rep. Dufault's first prime-sponsored measure, House Bill 1534, into law. It allows Toppenish's hospital to continue using its newly opened psychiatric care unit without losing money.

The hospital opened the mental health facility at the beginning of the year, but the state's payments for services were not high enough to cover the program's expenses. Dufault's bill increases the reimbursement rate to the average rate paid to rural hospitals, which is enough to cover the true costs.

The bill gained unanimous support in the Legislature. It is an important down payment on expanding access to care in our communities and ensures patients can receive treatment close to home and near their support network.



Zillah Veterans Memorial Park and Ride receives funding



The 2019-2021 transportation budget approved by the Legislature includes a funding request by Rep. Dufault for parking at one of the Yakima Valley's crown jewels: the Veterans Memorial and the Teapot Dome historical site in Zillah.

The new 101-space facility will provide parking for the site and serve carpoolers commuting on I-82 to Yakima and the Lower Valley. It will also be a launch site for wine-country tours.

The transportation budget provides \$664,000 for the project, which, in addition to funds already invested by the City of Zillah, will be enough to complete the facility.

Dufault secures \$2.5 million for housing for homeless Veterans and their families

Sponsored by Rep. Dufault and Rep. Chris Corry, one provision of the state's capital budget provides \$2.5 million for the conversion of the former U.S. Marine Corps Armory on 16th Avenue in Yakima into permanent supportive housing for homeless Veterans and their families.

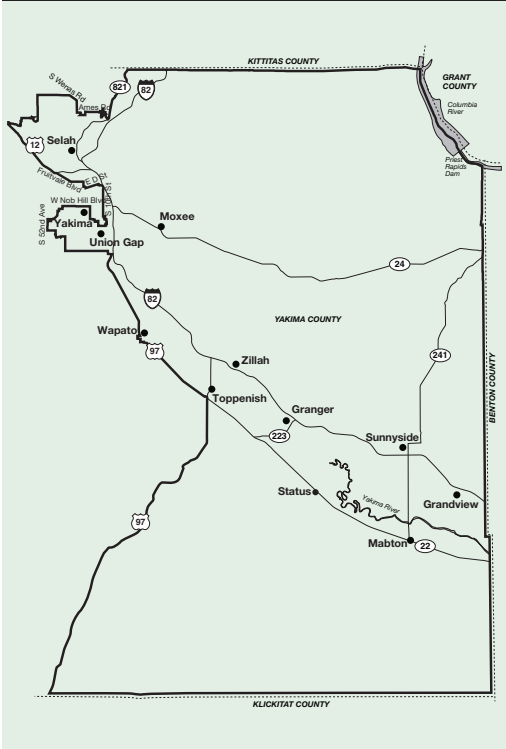
In addition, Rep. Dufault sponsored an on-site dental clinic that will be available to Veterans and their families. Dental care is listed among the top three unmet needs of homeless Veterans in our county, which isn't a surprise since VA dental clinics are located only in Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, Mt. Vernon, Vancouver, and Walla Walla. This will satisfy those unmet needs.



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15th District team secures funding for local projects in capital budget

For nearly eight years, Sen. Honeyford has been the Senate Republican leader on the Capital Budget Committee, working to make sure that there are significant regional water-related investments and funding for major projects in our community.

Working together, our 15th District team secured more than \$23 million for local projects, including \$40 million for the Yakima River Basin water supply.

This is a strong budget for priorities we all have as Washingtonians, and for needs in our community. The capital budget unlocks investments in building out mental-health facilities, helping rural school construction, and funding critical water projects statewide.

The local projects that are funded in the budget include:

- \$469,000 for the Yakima County Veterans Dental Facility;
- \$2 million for the Union Gap Library and Community Center;
- \$2.5 million for housing for homeless veterans and their families;
- \$875,000 for the Larson Gallery Renovation in Yakima;
- \$600,000 for the SOZO Sports Indoor Arena;
- \$500,000 for Sunnyside Airport Maintenance & Hangar;
- \$200,000 for Yakima Valley Fair and Rodeo Multi Use Facility and Livestock Arena Project ;

- \$63,000 for renovations and enhancements to the Wapato Filipino Hall;
- \$54,000 for Mabton City Park improvements;
- \$26,000 for the Sunnyside Yakima Valley-TEC Welding Program; and
- \$150,000 for construction at the Granger Historical Museum.



It has been part of a long-term plan at Yakima Valley College to see improvements to the Larson Gallery. The capital budget provides \$875,000 for the Larson Gallery renovation project.