

Weekly Legislative Update: **Transportation**

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March 20, 2022 – Session Summary

The 2022 legislative session ended on March 10 with adoption of all three budgets: operating, capital and transportation. The biggest news of the 2022 legislative session, as most readers are already aware, was the passage of a new transportation funding package. The \$17 billion, 16-year package includes the following categories of spending:

- **Climate Commitment Act Funding - \$5.4 billion**
 - o Active Transportation \$ 1.293 billion
 - o Transit \$ 3.004 billion
 - o Alternative Fuel & Electrification \$ 517 million
 - o Ferries \$ 435 million
 - o Rail \$ 162 million

Note that the transit funding component of the budget is 17%, the same percentage of funding as highway improvements. This is historic.

- **Other Funding - \$11.65 billion**
 - o Highway Maintenance & Preservation \$ 1.527 billion
 - o Highway Improvements \$ 3.663 billion
 - o Ferries (additional) \$ 1.038 billion
 - o Rail (additional) \$ 203 million
 - o Aviation \$ 12.25 million
 - o Traffic Operations \$ 99.7 million
 - o WA State Patrol \$ 555.6 million
 - o Other \$ 5.3 billion

The “other” category is comprised of a variety of programs, including toll operations, facilities and a long list of administrative programs and departments and includes funding for the mandated removal of fish passage barriers.

One major feature of this new package is zero-fare-free-transit and rail for youth under age 18. This appropriation of \$90 million a year to participating agencies will be distributed by a formula based on the proportional operating expenses reported in the Public Transportation Summary. There is a deadline of October 1, 2022, to provide such a zero-fare for agencies to be eligible.

The Climate Commitment Act is SB 5126, passed in 2021. This Act created the state’s cap & invest program intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other critical pollutants,

particularly in communities highly impacted by air pollution. It established several accounts for revenues generated by the cap & invest program, including the Carbon Emissions Reduction Account, from which transportation carbon emissions reducing purposes may be funded. All of the expenditures listed above in this account are intended to expand use of alternatives to conventional modes of transportation and thereby reduce emissions. The rail and ferry appropriations from this fund are for electrification.

To review a list of the specific projects approved in this funding package, see the documents entitled Agency & program Summaries and LEAP Documents (Project Lists) on [this page](#).

Since the Legislature focused so heavily on the transportation funding package, they did not pass much policy legislation. **Two bills that League supported which passed are:**

- **[HB 1673](#) Concerning broadband infrastructure loans and grants made by the public works board**, establishes a procedure for emergency loans to replace broadband infrastructure damaged by a natural disaster or unforeseen events.
- **[SB 5528](#) Relating to the imposition of additive revenue sources within a regional transit authority area**, would allow establishment of enhanced service zones for which new voter-approved taxes may be established and used to support transit. The only regional transit authority in Washington State is Sound Transit, and this will expand the voter approved funding allowable for Sound Transit.

How You Can Be Involved

- During the legislative session we will send Action Alerts in the [Legislative Newsletter](#). Please respond to these, which will direct you to an application to facilitate communicating with your legislators on an important vote in committees or on the chamber floor.
- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have education teams to take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.
- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Cynthia Stewart, Transportation Issue Chair, cstewart@lwvwa.org