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City of Bonney Lake

City of Fife

City of Milton

City of Pacific

City of Puyallup

City of Roy

City of Sumner

Covington Water

Firgrove Mutual Water Co.

Fox Island Mutual Water

Association Fruitland Mutual
Water Co.

Graham Hill Mutual Water Co.

Lake Josephine Riviera

Lakewood Water District

Mt. View-Edgewood Water Co.

Parkland Light and Water

Peninsula Light Co.

Pierce County Planning &
Public Works

PUD No. 1 of Thurston County

Spanaway Water Co.

Summit Water & Supply Co.

Tacoma Water

Town of Steilacoom

Valley Water District

Washington Water Service Co.

2025 Legislative Recap

Bill Clarke, RWPCPC State Lobbyist

The 2025 Legislative Session convened on January 13 and adjourned as scheduled on April 27. The 2025 Session was a “long session” of 105 days, which includes the adoption of biennial Operating, Capital, and Transportation Budgets. Legislators introduced 2,387 bills, of which 430 became law. The 2025 Session began with considerable uncertainty, given the number of new legislators, a loss of moderate Senate Democrat that shifted the Senate to the political left, and the new Governor Ferguson team including agency directors and policy advisers.

Water Utility and Water Resource Bills of Interest Passed in 2025

[The full text of all bills and bill reports can be reviewed at <https://leg.wa.gov/>]

SB 5212 – Filing Claims for Pre Code Water Uses in WRIA 1 Adjudication.. This bill was modeled on legislation passed in 1979, 2 years after the filing of the Yakima Basin Acquavella adjudication. Under SB 5212, a water user with a pre-code (pre-1917 surface water or pre-1945 groundwater) may file an adjudication court claim in Whatcom County Superior Court as part of the WRIA 1 adjudication, even if no statement of claim was previously filed. The bill acts as a limited claims reopener solely for water uses subject to the WRIA 1/Nooksack adjudication. While the WRIA 1/Nooksack Adjudication will not directly impact water rights elsewhere in Washington State, the case is certain to create new case law establishing statewide legal precedent.

SB 5033 – Mandating Testing for PFAS in Biosolids. This bill creates requirements for testing and reporting PFAS levels in biosolids. Under the bill, Ecology will issue sampling guidance during 2026, and testing at biosolids facilities must begin on January 1, 2027, with results due by September 30, 2028. The bill also creates an advisory committee on a number of PFAS and biosolids subjects.

SB 5627 – Underground Utilities Safety (“Dig Law”). SB 5627 makes a number of changes to the existing “call 811 before you dig” system, including a number of new definitions, prohibiting excavation prior to receiving positive responses, specifying new safe work methods near underground facilities, and requiring a web-based excavation notice platform managed by the one-number locator service.



SB 5303 – Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Water Supply Milestone. This bill extends to 2035 the water supply milestone of 214,000 acre-feet previously adopted by the Legislature with a 2025 date for the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. The bill also extends to 2035 the requirement to have a cost-benefit analysis of major water storage projects. In a related action, the final Operating Budget provided \$10 million to the Department of Natural Resources to pay off the original loan from DNR that helped fund the acquisition of the Teanaway Community Forest.

HB 1615 – Modifying Water System Classifications. Under HB 1615, default or assumed population numbers will not be used by the State and local governments for classification of Group A and Group B systems.

HB 1947 – Modifying Satellite Management Agency Requirements for Group B Water Systems. Under this bill, Group B water systems must be owned or operated by SMAs only if they meet certain criteria, such providing fire flow, having atmospheric storage, serving 10 or more connections, or requiring treatment to meet water quality standards. Local health boards may adopt stricter requirements.

Land Use and Housing Bills of Interest Passed

HB 1096 – Administrative Lot Splitting. HB 1096 requires cities to provide an administrative lot splitting process to create one additional buildable residential lot for a single-family dwelling or Middle Housing types. The bill requires that the applicant show that it has legal water and sewer supply in order to obtain the lot split approval.

SB 5471 – Allowing Middle Housing in Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) and in Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs). SB 5471 expands the prior Middle Housing passed in 2023's HB 1110 by allowing counties to authorize Middle Housing in unincorporated UGAs and LAMIRDs and limits appeals of those county zoning and development regulations.

Bills of Interest Not Passed, Could See Action in 2026 Session

2025 was the first year of a two-year legislative cycle, and bills introduced but not passed in the first year remain alive for consideration during the 2026 session. The bills below are of interest to water utilities and will likely see work during the 2025-26 interim and during the 2026 session:

HB 1345 – Regulating Detached Accessory Dwelling Units Outside UGAs. This bill would create specific limitations on Detached ADUs, to address the current situation that while some counties allow Detached ADUs, other county ADU ordinances have been invalidated by the Growth Management Hearings Boards. Under HB 1345, Detached ADUs would be limited to one per parcel with a maximum size of 1,296 square feet of floor area, includes water and septic requirements, and includes code enforcement provisions for counties to address unpermitted ADUs. Similar concepts were included in SB 5470, which was also heard in committee but did not pass and remains alive for 2026.

HB 1443 – Allowing Mobile Dwelling Units. HB 1443 would require all cities to allow two mobile dwelling units (mobile tiny homes, RVs, campers) on each parcel in residential areas. The bill included specific utility connection requirements for electrical, water, and wastewater services, and local permitting/inspection requirements and limitations.

HB 1702/SB 5088 – Authorizing Counties to Impose Public Utility Tax. Under this bill, counties could impose a utility tax of up to 3% on any utility service including water, sewer, electric, phone, or internet. Existing law provides this tax authority to cities, but not to county governments.



SB 5582/HB 1610 – Providing an Exemption to Public Disclosure for Critical Energy Infrastructure Information. This bill would add an exemption to the state’s Public Records Act to allow protection of public records relating to “critical energy infrastructure” whose incapacity or destruction could disrupt or diminish the energy supply to the extent that public health, safety, and general welfare are jeopardized. While drafted to apply to electric utilities, the bill is considered a potential model for water utility public records legislation.

HB 1690 – Assessing Statewide Water and Sewer Infrastructure Needs. HB 1690 would create a comprehensive assessment of the state’s water and sewer systems, identify infrastructure gaps, maintenance and upgrade needs, and potential funding strategies to address environmental, public health, and economic challenges.

SB 5061 – Prevailing Wage at Time of Performance. Under SB 5061, public works project owners must pay the prevailing wage in effect as of the time the work is performed, not as of when the contract was signed. The bill exempts small works roster projects and residential construction from the adjustment requirement, while maintaining provisions for reclassification of residential to commercial rates.

SB 5690 – Requiring WSDOT to Coordinate with Utilities on Fish Barrier Removal Projects. SB 5690 directs WSDOT to notify utilities at least one year prior to fish barrier removal project construction regarding utility relocation needs and directs the State to seek available federal funding assistance for utility relocation costs.

HB 1303 – Adding Environmental Justice to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). HB 1303 would add Environmental Justice to the list of elements of the environment that must be reviewed under SEPA, require mitigation for impacts to environmental justice or disproportionate impacts, and incorporates various environmental justice principles from the HEAL Act into SEPA.

SB 5360 – Environmental Crimes. SB 5360 would add a system of tiered criminal penalties to a number of different environmental laws, ranging from gross misdemeanors to Class B felonies.

HB 1906 – Enhancing Transparency and Oversight in Water Rate Regulation. The bill would require that water system plans include necessary capital improvements over the next ten years and increase notice to water system customers and nearby utilities prior to any change in the ownership of a private water system.

SB 5660 – Allowing Extension of Rural Utility Services Outside the UGA. SB 5660 would allow extension of certain rural services outside the UGA to address public health and environmental needs and protect such utility extensions from Growth Board appeals.



DAVID EVANS
AND ASSOCIATES INC.

Budgets and New Tax Increases

The major issue for the 2025 Legislature was how to resolve a projected \$12-\$16 billion projected 4-year budget deficit, caused by a variety of factors including prior overreliance on one-time federal COVID funds, unrealistic revenue growth assumptions, increased spending, and a slightly slowing economy.

Ultimately, an agreed tax package was introduced by the Legislative majority Democrats with about 10 days remaining in session. This package eliminated certain prior tax proposals, including a net worth or “wealth tax” that Governor Ferguson said he did not support. Final major tax measures included:

- Increases in the rates of the Capital Gains and Estate Tax;
- Increase in the B&O tax for most classification, and an increase in the maximum tax paid by advance computing companies;
- Applying sales tax to certain services and nicotine products, including a prepayment on sales tax for certain businesses;
- Creating a new excise tax on electric vehicle tax credits;
- Eliminating preferential tax rates, credits, or deductions;

The Capital Budget largely preserved key infrastructure programs, though the Legislature resorted to a familiar strategy of transferred tax revenue from the Public Works Assistance Account and replacing it with state bond dollars. While this preserves loan authority, the trend is troubling in terms of preservation the program’s long-term sustainability.

The Transportation Budget was supported by a 6 cent/gallon tax increase, not to fund new or additional projects but simply to keep up with maintenance needs, funds major projects already under construction, while funding non-road needs including state ferries and the U.S. v. Washington fish barrier removal program.



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2025 George Warren Fuller Award Winner

Tony Pardi, RH2 Engineering Inc.

We're proud to share that Randy Black, RH2 Engineering's Utility Resource Specialist, has been recognized with the 2025 George Warren Fuller Award, the highest accolade presented by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Pacific Northwest Section. This esteemed award is given to individuals who exemplify distinguished service in the water supply field, demonstrating the engineering skill, diplomatic talent, and constructive leadership that characterized the legacy of George Warren Fuller.

Randy's 40+ year career in the water industry has been defined by unwavering dedication, innovative problem-solving, and community-driven leadership—values that align with RH2's mission to improve everyday life in our local communities through technical expertise, innovative solutions, and trusted relationships.

Starting as an equipment operator and advancing to General Manager of Lakewood Water District, Randy has overseen critical initiatives that reflect RH2's commitment to technical excellence and exceeding client expectations. From implementing chlorination and cross-connection control programs to addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS/PFOA, Randy's work has had a lasting impact on water systems and public health throughout Washington State.

Beyond his professional achievements, Randy has exemplified integrity and team building, two core values at RH2. He revitalized the South Sound Subsection of PNWS-AWWA, transforming it into the thriving network it is today, and served as a mentor to countless young professionals, sharing his expertise and encouraging the next generation of water industry leaders.

The Fuller Award, presented annually by a committee of past recipients, recognizes individuals who exemplify the distinguished service, creative leadership, and technical excellence that defined George Warren Fuller's legacy. This year, Randy was selected for his remarkable contributions to the water industry and the Pacific Northwest region. The award presentation is steeped in tradition and a touch of suspense—the recipient is unaware they've been chosen. As the presenter begins to describe the winner's accomplishments, past honorees circle the room, drawing closer as the recognition gradually becomes clear. For Randy, it was a moment of surprise, celebration, and deep appreciation.

We're immensely proud to have Randy as part of our RH2 team, exemplifying our mission, vision, and values through his work and dedication.

Join us in congratulating Randy on this well-deserved recognition!



Leaving a Legacy

The future of the water industry is on the brink of transformative changes. A significant wave of experienced professionals is entering retirement, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and invaluable skills that have been honed over decades. These seasoned experts have dedicated their careers to the sector, forming longstanding partnerships that have shaped the industry. In preparation for their departure, many are actively mentoring their successors, transferring critical insights and expertise that are often difficult to replace. Despite these efforts, the depth of familiarity and collaborative history built over years of shared experiences is irreplaceable. As the industry transitions, it will be essential to preserve this legacy while also embracing new innovations and approaches to meet the challenges ahead.

- April 2025 - Tim Wells, Spanaway Water
- May 2025 - John Ryding, WA DOH Drinking Water
- June 2025 - Debbie Bailey, Pierce County Emergency Management
- June 2025 - Jeff Marti, WA Department of Ecology
- June 2025 - Andy Anderson, P.E., WA DOH Drinking Water
- July 2025 - Mike Craig, General Manager, Mt. View-Edgewood Water Co.
- August 2025 - Carol Stuckey, P.E., WA DOH Drinking Water
- December 2025 - Mike Gallagher, WA Department of Ecology



RWCPC Visit Clover Park School District

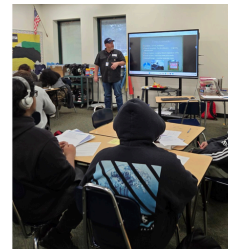
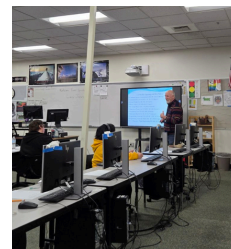
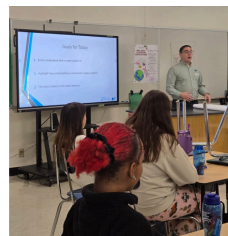
The Clover Park School District recently welcomed RWCPC members to share their knowledge with students in the Sustainable Design, Career Choices, and Core Plus Construction classes. General Managers Larry Jones, Ted Hardiman, and Marshall Meyer gave an engaging 90-minute presentation, diving into exciting topics like water systems, construction, maintenance, and where our water comes from.

To make the learning experience even more fun, Lakewood Water District organized a site tour of the View Road Water Treatment facility for 40 enthusiastic students. They were thrilled to see how everything works and how water travels from the ground to their own taps!

If your agency would like to make a difference by giving a presentation or hosting students from your district, please reach out to the Communication team. They would be more than happy to customize a presentation just for you, helping inspire the next generation!



Site Tour of View Road Treatment



School Presentation at Clover Park High School

PFAS - Finding Solutions

Lakewood Water District has detected PFAS in some of the District’s groundwater wells. PFAS are a group of human-made chemicals that have the potential to adversely affect human health and the environment. The source of the PFAS in the groundwater is firefighting foam that was used at JBLM for decades. In response to the situation, the District has taken some wells offline, drilled new wells, and constructed filtration systems.

Since 2017, the District is at the forefront of tackling this issue with the construction of granular activated carbon (GAC) treatment facilities at our Ponders H-1 and H-2 well site and Scotts G-1 and G-2 well site to remove the PFAS from the water and trap it in the GAC filtration process. In 2025 and 2026 Lakewood Water will construct two additional GAC facilities. One filtration facility will be at our Country Place U-1 well. The second GAC filtration facility will be constructed at our 88th and Pine, J-1, J-2, and J-3 wells site. Unfortunately, the cost of building and maintaining GAC filtration facilities is much higher than our typical wells that just require chlorination or filtering natural minerals like iron or manganese. These two facilities will provide over 3 million gallons per day of water combined.

Where it is feasible, we will be drilling deeper wells to get past the aquifers where PFAS has been detected. Testing of the deeper aquifers has shown no sign of PFAS contamination. This will allow us to bring these sites back to operation. We are in the process of drilling a replacement well at our Oakbrook O-2 and O-3 Well site, and are planning to bring three new wells online over the next few years to help offset the decreased production capacity of the water system.

Unfortunately, the work is not yet complete, and the significant cost impact to the District continues. The District staff and Board of Commissioners continue to seek ways to offset cost impacts where possible, including several low interest loans and securing over \$13 million in grants for these projects.



R-2 Well Drilling



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