



2019 Legislative Session Kicks Off Today

1.14.19

The 2019 Legislative Session began today in Olympia; AIA Washington Council will be working with legislators on issues that impact architects and the practice of architecture throughout the 105-day session.

The primary business during odd-year sessions is to adopt the state's two-year budget that will cover July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021 (supplemental budgets are often passed in interim sessions). More info about Washington's budgeting process can be found [here](#).

Top issues facing legislators this year include:

- Mental health funding in response to federal court-mandated requirements.
- Revisiting funding for local school levies; addressing funding for special education; and expanding early childhood education.
- Housing affordability measures – read an overview [here](#).
- Climate change regulations – see info on Gov. Inslee's Green Buildings package below.
- Tax reform, including a likely Democratic push to establish a capital gains tax and recurring discussions on income taxes for business and/or individuals.

AIA|WA Issues

AIA|WA is currently tracking the following issues. You will receive updates during the session on these and other topics; we welcome your input at any time.

- **Taxes:** Governor Inslee's budget includes a 22.3% increase from current spending, including a 9% capital gains tax and a 67% increase in the B&O tax on service businesses, including architecture (from 1.5% to 2.5%). AIA|WA strongly opposes the B&O increase. We favor comprehensive tax reform that does not put the burden on a limited class of taxpayers.
- **Architect Practice Act Amendments:** AIA|WA has initiated legislation to amend the state's Practice Act for architects to address NCARB-approved changes to the path to licensure, including eliminating a year of AXP electives and allowing all candidates to complete the education, experience and testing portions of licensure non-sequentially. In addition, we are requesting a change to the use of the word "intern" to only apply to non-degreeed individuals (per AIA National policy) and adding language to clarify the definition of the practice of architecture to reduce the possibility engineers are allowed to stamp architecture plans – something that has happened in a few local jurisdictions.

- **Condo liability reform:** there is a strong effort underway by legislators to address liability issues around condo construction that will allow designers, buildings and developers to engage in condo projects. To date the effort has largely focused on more tightly defining condo warranties, which does not specifically address liability concerns for architects. AIA|WA is working to include additional measures that will help reduce liability for architects.
- **Climate change legislation:** Governor Inslee has a [Clean Buildings](#) package aimed at reducing carbon emissions from buildings – including upgrading existing buildings, accelerating innovation in new buildings and investing in highly efficient publicly-funded buildings. Architects are well-suited to address the real-world implications of these policies, and AIA|WA has been active in these discussions.
- **School construction:** AIA|WA will support efforts to increase funding mechanisms for K-12 school construction, including legislation to lower the threshold for voters to approve school bonds to 50% (from 60%) and legislation to increase school construction assistance program funding levels per student and to increase the student space allocation.
- **Capital budget & alternative project delivery:** AIA|WA will support a robust capital budget that fully funds projects while advocating for process improvements. In addition, we will support legislation requested by the Capital Projects Advisory Review Board to make adjustments to design-build and job order contracting statute language.
- **Other issues**
 - Efforts by the state to require public contracts to be evaluated for moving the work in-house (making the selection criteria fee-based instead of based on qualifications).
 - Legislation to restore a cancelled EPA policy that would reduce HFCs in refrigerants.
 - Efforts to expand the definition of wrongful death in terms of family members who can file a lawsuit.
 - Legislation to address the use of toxic materials in building products.

Get involved

We need your participation to make sure we are accurately representing your interests. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- Let us know what you think – we always want to hear from you!
- Join an AIA|WA [policy committee](#)
- Participate in [Capitol Connections](#)
- Communicate with your legislators about issues that are important to you.

- Interested in following the Legislature from afar? The Spokesman-Review has great tips, [here](#).

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