

AIA Washington Council



December 2024 | Advocacy Newsletter

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2025 Session Preview



The 2025 Washington State Legislative Session:

The 2025 legislative session represents a crucial period for Washington state lawmakers. Starting January 13 and running through April 27, this 105-day "long" session will focus on two primary objectives: advancing key policy initiatives and developing the state's biennial budget. For our profession, this session carries special importance, and AIAWA is preparing thoroughly for the intensive four months ahead.

The 2024 election cycle has brought significant changes to the Legislature. Democrats have strengthened their position by gaining one seat in each chamber, resulting in a 30-19 majority in the Senate and a 59-39 majority in the House. The transition in state leadership includes former Attorney General Bob Ferguson winning the gubernatorial race, with Nick Brown set to become the new Attorney General. Two major ballot initiatives seeking to repeal the Capital Gains tax and Climate Commitment Act were defeated, though voters did approve I-2066 regarding natural gas service.

With the election concluded, legislators have begun preparing for the upcoming session. Bill prefilings started on December 2nd, offering an early glimpse of the 2025 legislative agenda. Based on the prefiled bills and discussions with legislators, key focus areas are expected to include addressing the budget shortfall and revenue options, transportation funding, housing accessibility (encompassing diverse housing types and affordability levels), unemployment insurance for striking workers, and healthcare mergers.

Based on what we know is coming, here is a sample of the policies AIAWA will be spending time on in the coming session:



2025 Session Preview



Session Preview: 2025 Priorities

Interior Design: Following trends nationwide, the interior design coalition is proposing legislation to establish a Title Act with Stamp and Seal privileges for Registered Commercial Interior Designer, offering a voluntary registration option. This proposal would create the addition of RCW 18.08A and would regulate the commercial interior design profession. Given the limited time AIAWA has had with the bill language, as well as the need to socialize the concept with our members and come to a supportive consensus, we are strongly encouraging the interior design coalition to collaborate with us over the legislative session and interim to create a bill that we can all support.

URM Budget Proviso: The City of Seattle is requesting a Governor's budget proviso to support a study on feasible tax incentives that can reduce the financial impacts associated with seismically retrofitting URM (unreinforced masonry) buildings based on the recommendations of the State Seismic Safety Sub-committee. Our Historic Resources Committee is supporting this effort.

Stock School Plans: Every few years, the Legislature introduces some version of stock school design legislation. Last biennium, AIAWA was successful in defeating SB 5343, a bill seeking to reduce the cost of school construction through the use of stock school plans, but we expect to see something similar in the coming session. Multiple conversations with legislators have revealed a deep concern with the cost of school construction, and an eagerness to find a solution to this challenge. Though they are looking at many options, we have heard that stock schools are on the table once again.

Our Education Committee is addressing this head on by attending school tours with the Washington Association of Maintenance and Operations Administrators (WAMOA) and created a document which educates legislators about these costs and the shortsightedness of stock schools.

Taxes: Washington is looking at a multi-billion dollar budget shortfall over the next four years. This could look even more dire depending on the outcome of the initiatives, which is why many legislators are hesitant to discuss any legislation with a major price tag. That said, some legislators have previewed their plans to address this shortfall through new tax programs. One idea that seems to be gaining momentum is a payroll expense tax, similar to the JumpStart tax in Seattle. If it follows the Seattle model, employers would be required to pay a tax on employee wages if the business has more than \$X in payroll expenses and pay at least one employee more than \$Y in annual compensation. The dollar amounts have yet to be determined. Our Practice Committee will monitor and evaluate any legislation that comes forward.

2025 Session Preview



Session Preview: 2025 Priorities, cont.

Transit Oriented-Development: Promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) statewide has been a priority for AIAWA the last few legislative sessions. We saw two versions of TOD legislation, which sought to increase housing density and affordability in areas around transit stations, last biennium and have been told that it is expected to return in 2025. Our Livability Committee, comprised of members across Washington, look forward to informing TOD legislation that works for our state's diverse communities. As the Legislature continues to shape its version of TOD legislation, we plan to share our expertise with legislators, as well as other stakeholders, to help craft balanced policy that recognizes the unique needs of different regions.

State Fee Schedule: Earlier this year, AIAWA advocated successfully to preserve A/E Basic Services and fair compensation in state public works projects, securing updated hourly rates and a commitment from OFM for stakeholder-inclusive review of future guidelines. We hope to pick up this work with OFM at the start of the year.

Embodied Carbon: Following the passage of HB 1282 last session, Rep. Duerr plans to build on her embodied carbon work in 2025 with CALgreen inspired legislation. Her bill, which is still in the development stage, seeks to make embodied carbon emissions reduction part of the building code. The bill includes three compliance pathways:

- Path 1: Provides that building projects that reuse 45 percent of an existing structure and envelope automatically comply with the embodied carbon reduction requirements;
- Path 2: Requires all building projects to achieve an embodied carbon emissions reduction averaged across 90 percent of covered materials.
- Path 3: As an alternative to path 2, requires all building projects to achieve an embodied carbon emissions reduction for covered materials as demonstrated by a whole building life cycle assessment compared to a reference building

This would apply all new construction, addition, and renovation of any building covered under the International Building Code that is 50,000 square feet or larger.

Members of our Climate Committee have already had the opportunity to provide feedback, and we look forward to continuing our conversations around this bill.



Get Involved

Take Part in the 2025 Legislative Session

There are plenty of opportunities to take part in the legislative session, both as part of AIA's efforts or on your own. The first step is deciding which issues you are most interested in, then finding out how best to engage. We can help!

Ways to Participate:

Follow Your Legislators

You can sign up for your legislators' update emails via the [Legislature's website](#). Find each of your three legislators and go to their home pages to register.

Contact Your Legislators

Email or call your legislators to let them know your opinion on a specific bill. Include the bill number if possible, and offer points specific to your experience. You can find your legislative district and legislator contact information [here](#).

Testify on a Bill

Any member of the public can sign up to testify on a bill at its public hearing (this is the first step to considering a bill in committee; any bill may have multiple public hearings if it keeps moving through the process). Testimony is typically limited to two minutes (sometimes less depending on the number of people testifying and the committee's agenda) and can be done both in-person and virtually. After signing up on Legislature's website for virtual testimony, you'll receive a Zoom link to enter the hearing. You may also submit written testimony. Learn more [here](#).

Track A Bill

Sign up for notifications regarding specific bills via the [Legislature's website](#). Enter the bill number and hit Search. Then click "Get Email Notifications".

Register Your Position on a Bill

You can weigh in pro or con on a bill by entering your name, email and city. Committee members receive pro/con lists as they are considering legislation. Get your position on a bill noted for the legislative record [here](#).

Need Help?

Contact [Samantha](#) for help accessing the Legislature, commenting on bills, figuring out a bill's status, or to provide testimony.

Stay Informed and Get Involved:

We encourage you to stay informed and participate in the legislative process. Your engagement is vital, and we want to hear your voice. Consider joining one of our policy committees for the best opportunity to influence ongoing legislation.

For more information and to get involved, please reach out to [Samantha](#).



Capitol Connections 2025

Mark your calendars for March 3, 2025, and join us for an exciting day of connecting with your legislators and addressing critical issues affecting our profession.

This lobby day promises not only to be impactful but also an enjoyable experience for both members and legislators. Your participation is crucial in making our collective voice heard on matters that shape our industry's future.

Event Details:

Date: March 3, 2025

Location: Olympia, WA

Time: 8:30am-3:30pm

Registration Deadline: January 8, 2025

We look forward to the meaningful discussions that will unfold. Save the date for what is sure to be a day filled with connection, advocacy, and shared passion for architecture.

Register Now



Events:

Certified Passive House Designer Training Begins: January 16th

Hosted by: The Passive House Network
Learn more [here](#).

Shape Washington's Building Codes

The State Building Code Council is currently seeking professionals to serve on Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) for the 2024 code adoption cycle. This is a valuable opportunity for our members to contribute their expertise and influence the development of Washington's building codes. Technical Advisory Groups review new editions of the model codes to identify significant changes and review existing and proposed state amendments.

The Council is recruiting for positions on TAGs for the 2024 code adoption cycle. In the 2024 cycle, the state building codes are divided into two groups. Group 1 is the International Building Code; the International Existing Building Code, the International Fire Code, the International Mechanical Code, and the Washington State Energy Code (Commercial). Group 2 is the International Residential Code, Washington State Energy Code (Residential), The Uniform Plumbing Code and The International Wildland-Urban Interface Code.

The 2024 Group 2 TAGs will convene in 2025 to begin review of the Group 2 codes. The review process will conclude with a report to the standing committees. The TAGs set a meeting schedule once convened. Recruitment is also open for the Single Exit/Multiplex Housing. Vacancies on Group 1 TAGs are also open for recruitment.

The Council welcomes all applicants for positions on any of the TAGs. Please see the website for the application form and process: Applicants will be asked to confirm the support of a local or statewide organization, where possible. **All positions are open and previous TAG members must reapply.** The deadline for applicants is January 3, 2025.

Deadline: January 3, 2025

As architects, our participation in this process is vital to ensuring that Washington's building codes reflect our professional expertise and experience. We encourage our members to consider this opportunity to contribute to our state's building standards. If you have any questions, please contact staff at sbcc@des.wa.gov.

[Apply Now](#)





Support Your Profession: Invest in APC

Your advocacy matters, and so does your role in shaping the legislative landscape that influences our profession. AIA Washington Council is your advocate in state government, diligently working on key issues that impact the architecture community.

The legislative and regulatory environment is a critical arena that directly affects how we provide professional services. The AIAWA Architects Political Committee (APC) is a vital part of our advocacy efforts. It supports lawmakers who champion our priorities, endorsing their campaigns and raising awareness about issues crucial to architects

What APC Does:

- **Supports Advocacy Priorities:** APC backs lawmakers aligned with our advocacy priorities and the values of our profession.
- **Builds Relationships:** By supporting campaigns and engaging with legislators, APC strengthens the relationships between AIAWA and lawmakers.
- **Amplifies Your Voice:** APC enables architects to become a powerful voice for the design and construction industry, positively influencing legislative decisions.

We can't do it alone. Your expertise and advocacy are critical for the architectural profession. Investments in APC ensures face-to-face opportunities to educate legislators about our work and provides a platform to advocate for the priorities of Washington architects.



Benefits of Your Investment:

- **Education Opportunities:** Your support enables face-to-face interactions, educating legislators about the architectural profession.
- **Advocacy Platform:** APC provides a platform for architects to advocate for our priorities, ensuring our voices are heard.
- **Political Influence:** By contributing to candidates aligned with our values, APC gives architects a strong political voice in state offices.

How You Can Contribute:

Your investment in APC is an investment in the future of our profession. Contribute to support candidates who align closely with AIAWA's legislative priorities and our shared values.

Visit the [APC Contribution Page](#) to learn more.

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AIA Washington Council serves as the collective voice for and a resource on state government policies that impact the practice of architecture for all architects and the profession through AIA components in Washington State.

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