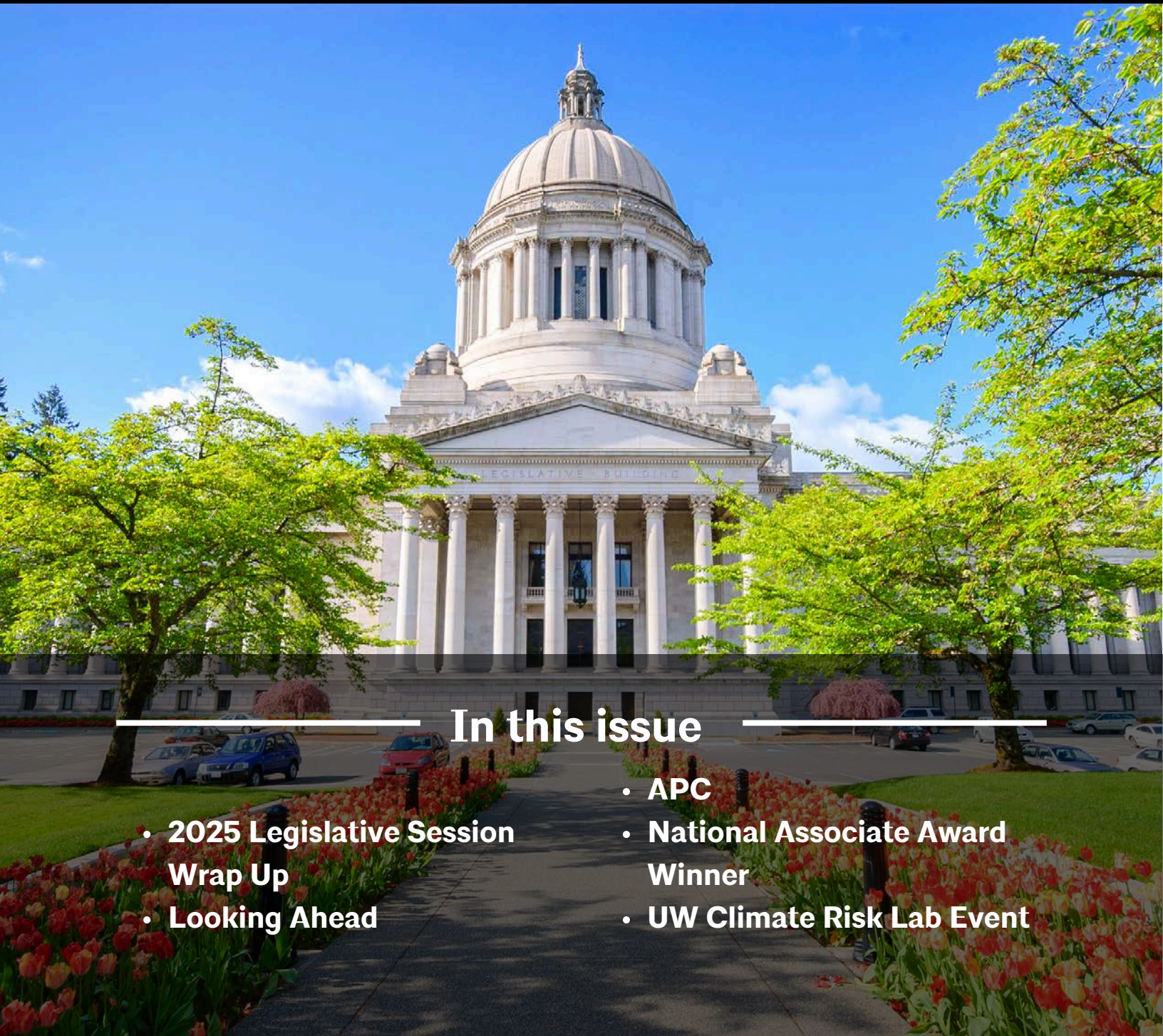


AIA Washington Council

May 2025 | Advocacy Newsletter



In this issue

- **2025 Legislative Session Wrap Up**
- **Looking Ahead**

- **APC**
- **National Associate Award Winner**
- **UW Climate Risk Lab Event**



2025 Legislative Session

2025 Session Comes to a Close

The 2025 Washington State legislative session concluded on Sunday evening, marking the end of one of the most challenging and emotionally charged sessions in recent memory. From its opening days in January, the session was defined by significant transitions in leadership and pressing fiscal challenges.

This year saw a notably strong Democratic presence, with 60% supermajorities in both chambers following last fall's elections. The session began with the swearing-in of a new Governor and three new statewide executives, alongside nearly 20 new or newly promoted legislators.

Dominating the entire session was the daunting task of addressing Washington's projected budget deficit, which at various points was estimated between \$6 billion and \$20 billion. This fiscal reality shaped nearly every major legislative decision, from proposed spending cuts to the pursuit of new revenue sources. The final \$77.8 billion operating budget includes approximately \$6 billion in cuts and nearly \$9 billion in new revenue over the four-year outlook.

The session was marked by deep ideological divisions not only across party lines but within caucuses as

lawmakers debated approaches to the financial crisis. These tensions were further heightened by the unexpected losses of former House Speaker Frank Chopp (D-43), a longtime champion of affordable housing and social justice, and Senator Bill Ramos (D-5), who passed away just two weeks before adjournment.

Despite these challenges, the Legislature considered over 2,500 bills, with approximately 450 passing to Governor Ferguson's desk. These bills now await the Governor's action within the twenty-day review period (excluding Sundays).

Read on to learn more about the legislation that advanced this year.



2025 Legislative Session



Budget & Taxes

After months of intense debate, lawmakers finalized a \$77.8 billion operating budget in the closing hours of the session. The spending plan, which passed by narrow margins in both chambers, increases state spending by 9% compared to the previous two-year cycle.

Unlike earlier proposals, the adopted budget fully funds negotiated compensation packages for state employees, avoiding the previously discussed monthly furloughs. Substantial investments in K-12 education made the cut, as did the Governor's priority funding for law enforcement recruitment. To help balance the books, several newer social programs will see their implementation pushed back. Financial projections show the state maintaining approximately \$225 million in reserves plus \$2.5 billion in the rainy day fund by mid 2027.

To address the significant deficit, legislators approved a suite of revenue measures expected to generate about \$9.4 billion over four years, considerably less than the \$21 billion initially proposed. The final package excludes several controversial proposals like a wealth tax on assets over \$50 million and a payroll tax on high-earning employees.

Major Tax Changes

HB 2081- This B&O tax increases rates across multiple business categories. Most notable for our industry, architectural firms would see an increase from 1.75% to 2.1% for the service and other activities B&O tax rate for businesses with gross income of over \$5 million. Businesses with gross income between \$1 million and \$5 million would remain subject to the 1.75% tax rate. The bill also creates a new .5% surcharge for companies with taxable income exceeding \$250 million. Expected to bring in roughly \$5.6 billion.

SB 5814- Extends taxation to previously exempt services including IT support, website development, temporary staffing, and advertising (with exceptions for signage). Projected to generate about \$2.7 billion.

SB 5813- Raises the capital gains rate for transactions over \$1 million and creates a steeper progression for estate taxes, topping out at 35% for the largest estates. Estimated to bring in \$680 million.

SB 5794- Adjusts or removes certain preferential tax rates. Expected to generate around \$386 million.

HB 2077- Creates new taxation on the trading of regulatory credits related to electric vehicles, commonly referred to as the "Tesla Tax." Expected to raise nearly \$200 million.

Governor Ferguson has not yet indicated whether he'll sign the complete package. While he can remove specific spending items with line item vetoes, he would need to veto entire sections of tax legislation, potentially requiring corresponding spending reductions to keep the budget balanced.

2025 Legislative Session



Livability

HB 1491- TOD

After three years of advocacy, transit-oriented development has finally made it across the finish line! HB 1491 creates a framework for walkable, mixed-use communities near transit hubs throughout Washington state. We're grateful to all AIAWA members who advocated for this bill during Capitol Connections and devoted countless hours to shaping this legislation.

The bill requires cities planning under the Growth Management Act to allow higher-density development within station areas, with minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.5 near rail stations and 2.5 near bus rapid transit stops.

HB 1491 balances requirements with incentives to create mixed-income communities. It establishes affordability requirements (either 10% affordable housing or 20% workforce housing maintained for 50 years) and creates a new 20-year Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) for qualifying projects. Cities must also reduce certain impact fees by 50% for projects within station areas that claim the new tax exemption.

This creates exciting opportunities to design vibrant,

mixed-use developments that leverage transit investments while addressing Washington's housing needs. The bill includes a 1.5 FAR bonus for buildings with 100% affordable housing and exempts family-sized units (three or more bedrooms) from FAR calculations. The legislation also promotes sustainable design by requiring cities to allow greater building height and increased density for developments using mass timber in bus station areas.

The Department of Commerce will administer grants to help cities implement these requirements, funding infrastructure improvements, planning assistance, and staffing resources. HB 1491 currently awaits the governor's signature.

SB 5184- Parking Reform

In a significant win for housing affordability and design flexibility, the legislature passed the Parking Reform and Modernization Act. This bill was a priority for AIAWA this year, and we are grateful to all our members who advocated for this legislation during Capitol Connections.

The legislation limits parking requirements to no more than 0.5 parking spaces per multifamily dwelling unit and one space per single family home. For commercial spaces, requirements cannot exceed two spaces per 1,000 square feet. The bill also eliminates minimum parking requirements entirely for several categories, including residences under 1,200 square feet, commercial spaces under 3,000 square feet, affordable housing, senior housing, child care facilities, and ground-level commercial spaces in mixed-use buildings.

These changes provide greater flexibility in site planning, building design, and project feasibility. By reducing or eliminating mandatory parking minimums,

2025 Legislative Session



Livability, cont.

projects can potentially allocate more space to housing units, utilize challenging sites more effectively, and reduce overall construction costs. Cities with populations over 50,000 must implement these changes within 18 months, while those between 30,000-50,000 have three years to comply. The bill passed with bipartisan support and is awaiting the governor's signature.

HB 1108- Housing Cost Drivers

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) will undertake a comprehensive study to identify and analyze the primary factors affecting both homeownership and rental housing costs throughout the state.

The study will involve extensive stakeholder engagement, requiring WSIPP to conduct fact finding discussions with representatives from 22 different groups, including economists, developers, builders, labor organizations, realtors, local governments, tenants, landlords, lenders, utility providers, and notably, an organization representing architects. The Department of Commerce will provide support by facilitating access to necessary data and resources.

WSIPP must submit its findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2026. For architects, this presents an opportunity to provide valuable input on how design and construction factors influence housing costs in Washington. The bill passed with bipartisan support and is awaiting the governor's signature.

HB 1096- Lot Splitting

This legislation creates a simplified administrative pathway for homeowners to split existing residential lots into two buildable parcels. Cities must establish a streamlined administrative approval process that can be combined with concurrent review of a residential building permit. Applications are reviewed by the planning director or designee based on clear and objective development standards, with no public hearings or design reviews (other than administrative design review) required.

To qualify for this streamlined process, the lot split must create only one new lot, both lots must meet minimum size requirements, and the parent lot cannot have been previously created through this process. Properties must also be in residential zones with available sewer and water service. Cities are required to implement the lot splitting requirements within their next comprehensive plan update due in 2027 or within two years of the bill's effective date for other cities.

The bill passed with bipartisan support and is awaiting the governor's signature.

2025 Legislative Session



Practice

HB 1353- Self Certification

This bill establishes a framework allowing cities to create self-certification programs for detached ADU projects. Under this legislation, registered architects can self-certify that detached ADU plans comply with applicable building code requirements, significantly streamlining the permit review process.

Provisions of the program include cities establishing minimum qualification requirements for participating architects, implementing random audits of applications, creating penalties for failed audits, and requiring professional liability insurance for participating architects. The legislation also establishes a statewide database tracking architects subject to penalties. The program will be assessed through required reporting to the Department of Commerce by July 2028.

The bill passed with strong bipartisan support and has already received Governor Ferguson's signature. AIAWA was actively involved throughout the legislative process, successfully advocating to limit the scope of self-certification exclusively to detached ADUs rather than broader categories.

HB 1183- Building Code and Development Regulation Reform

HB 1183 removes regulatory barriers for architects implementing sustainable design standards. The legislation allows insulated walls to extend 8 inches into setbacks, permits buildings to exceed height limits for additional insulation and solar panel installations, and eliminates mandatory facade modulation and upper-level setback requirements for qualifying projects.

These changes streamline the design process for high-performance buildings by modifying how floor area is measured (now from the interior face of exterior walls) and removing mandatory on-site parking requirements for sustainable projects. The bill directly addresses challenges architects have faced when designing to Passive House standards. This legislation, signed by Governor Ferguson, positions Washington architects to lead in creating more sustainable, energy-efficient buildings.

2025 Legislative Session



Practice, cont.

HB 1403- Condo Reform

This legislation creates a new pathway for smaller condominium projects (including buildings with 12 or fewer units and limited to 2-3 stories) to provide express 2-10 warranty coverage as an alternative to the implied warranties of quality currently required under the Washington Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act.

The bill redefines construction standards for implied warranties. Rather than requiring compliance with "engineering and construction standards generally accepted in Washington," the new language specifies that condominiums must be constructed in accordance with approved plans and specifications, manufacturer installation guidelines, applicable building codes, and published industry standards specifically incorporated into those codes.

The bill also exempts accessory dwelling units organized as condominiums from building enclosure design and inspection requirements that typically apply to larger multifamily buildings, removing regulatory barriers for small-scale housing development. HB 1403 passed the legislature with bipartisan support and awaits the Governor's signature.

SB 5571- Exterior Cladding Materials

This bill prohibits cities and counties from requiring or excluding specific exterior cladding materials that comply with the state building code.

AIAWA actively advocated for provisions related to resilience during the legislative process, and we're pleased to see these concerns addressed in the final bill. The law includes important exceptions for wildfire protection, allowing jurisdictions to require fire resistant siding materials in vulnerable areas. Additional exemptions exist for historic districts, landmarks, and areas subject to the international wildland-urban interface code. The bill has been delivered to Governor Ferguson and is awaiting signature.

Looking Ahead

While AIAWA successfully advocated for several important bills this session, many others didn't advance due to fiscal constraints and the legislature's focus on budget matters.

As we prepare for the 2026 session, we'll continue championing priorities including **HB 1458** (embodied carbon emissions reduction the building code), **SJR 8200** (lowering the school bond threshold to a simple majority), and working with the Office of Financial Management on the state fee schedule.

In 2025, we'll be conducting a comprehensive member survey as part of our strategic planning process. This will include gathering your input on topics such as interior design registration, embodied carbon, and affordable housing. Your feedback will be essential in shaping our advocacy agenda and ensuring we represent the interests of our architectural community effectively.



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 AIWA 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 AIWA 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 AIWA's legislative priorities and our shared values.

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



Katie Cherrier

National AIA Associate Award Winner- Katie Cherrier

AIWA member Katie Cherrier Assoc. AIA, was selected as a winner of the 2025 Associates Award from the AIA.

“Leading by example on non-traditional career paths in architecture, Katie supports and advocates locally and nationally for room to be made in the profession for native and women architects.” – Doug Ito FAIA

Katie joined AIWA's inaugural Board Associates program in 2020, gaining valuable non-profit board experience as part of an initiative now in its third cohort that develops leadership skills and networking opportunities for emerging professionals across Washington state. Her ongoing advocacy for alternative licensure pathways and student engagement led to her becoming AIWA's first National Associates Committee Representative. Katie currently serves Washington as an at-large member of the NAC board, continuing her commitment to supporting architectural professionals.

Read about Katie [here](#).

The [AIA Associates Award](#) recognizes exceptional leaders within the Associate AIA membership designation who have made significant contributions to their chapter, community, professional organizations, and/or in the design and construction industries.



Climate Risk, Housing, & Insurance: A Washington State Perspective

The UW Climate Risk Lab is launching a year-long series of events designed to connect industry professionals, policymakers, and academics around understanding climate-related financial risks and fostering stakeholder collaboration.

Join them for their inaugural event focused on the intersection of climate risk with housing and insurance markets in Washington state. Insurance Commissioner Patty Kuderer will deliver the keynote address, followed by an expert panel discussion featuring representatives from Russell Investments, PEMCO, and other industry leaders.

This is an excellent opportunity for architects to gain valuable insights into how climate considerations are reshaping financial decision-making in the built environment. Attendees will include professionals from across the housing and insurance sectors, investment community, public sector representatives, and graduate students specializing in these fields.

Seats are filling up!

Friday, May 16 · 10:30am - 1:00pm
Burke Museum · 4303 Memorial Way NE, Seattle
98195

Learn more about the Climate Risk Lab's mission [here](#).

Register Now



Staff



Tammie Sueirro
Executive Director
tsueirro@aiaawa.org



Samantha Morrow
Government Affairs Director
smorrow@aiaawa.org

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.

2025 Board of Directors

President

Kyle Lepper, AIA—Central Washington

President-Elect

Clarissa Easton, AIA—Southwest Washington

Past President

Dave Buescher, AIA—Spokane

Secretary-Treasurer

Jed Ballew, AIA—Seattle/ Northwest

Brittany Porter, AIA—Seattle

Rushyan Yen, AIA—Seattle

Osama Quotah, AIA—Seattle

Jamie Sandberg, AIA—Southwest Washington

Rio Namiki, AIA, YAF Rep.- Seattle

Chien-Yi Chu, Assoc. AIA, STAR Rep- Spokane

Karly Ennis, Assoc. AIA,- Central Washington

Blanca Cazares, Assoc. AIA- Spokane

Matt Hutchins, AIAWA, Strategic Councilor