



# February 2024 Advocacy Newsletter

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

We are now halfway through the 2024 legislative session in Olympia, which began on January 8th. The 60-day “short session” runs only until March 7th, making for a tightly packed schedule to address key priorities through new laws and supplemental budget appropriations.

Over the last few weeks, legislators have been deeply engaged in policy and fiscal committees, participating in public hearings and voting on bills. A record number of bills have been introduced this year, adding to the already long list of carryover bills that did not pass during the 2023 session which were still eligible for consideration this year. That massive volume intensifies the frenzied pace as legislators rush to pass bills ahead of the approaching House of Origin cutoff on February 13. Bills not passed off the floor in their chamber of origin are effectively dead, unless deemed necessary to implement the budget.

Adding an interesting wrinkle this year are six citizen initiatives headed for the November ballot, covering hot topics like tax, environmental, public safety, and education policy. The existence of the initiatives seems to have dampened legislative action in those areas from majority Democrats.

As the session races towards the March 7th finish line, AIWA remains hard at work to leverage this tight window in Olympia to best represent the interests of members across the state. Please reach out with any questions or input on priorities.

## Session Milestones

The legislative calendar has passed its first two cut-off deadlines: bills that failed to pass out of their policy committees by January 31 are dead for the year, as are bills that did not pass out of their fiscal committees by February 5. At this time all bills must be in one of three places:

1. In the house of origin Rules Committee which determines which bills make it to the house of origin floor for a vote;
2. On the schedule for a floor vote in the house of origin; or
3. In the second house having passed out of the house of origin.

All bills must pass their house of origin by February 13 to continue.



# Climate Legislation

Our committees have been keeping busy tracking legislation and advocating for our top priorities. Though we have lost some good bills along the way, AIA WA has been quite successful in advancing important legislation this session. Below is a look at some of the bills that remain alive from AIA WA priorities list.

Note that bills in the House or Senate Rules committees are awaiting being “pulled” by committee members for a vote on the House or Senate floor. Not all bills will make it to the floor for a vote.



## Embodied Carbon

**HB 1282** by Rep. Duerr was introduced last session and has been retained in present status for 2024. This means that our priority embodied carbon legislation is currently in the House Rules Committee awaiting the opportunity to be heard on the floor. The bill, better known as “Buy Clean Buy Fair”, requires firms selected by state agencies and institutions of higher education for large construction or building renovation contracts to report Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), Health Product Declarations, working conditions, and other data. Additionally, the legislation directs the Department of Commerce to continue the development of a public database for the reported data as well as establishes the “Buy Clean Buy Fair” workgroup. This aims to promote sustainable practices in the construction industry and improve working conditions for employees.

In addition to this legislation, AIAWA has worked with Rep. Duerr to submit two budget provisos concerning embodied carbon. The first proviso would provide funding for the State Building Code Council to conduct a study reviewing language addressing embodied carbon used in the building codes of other jurisdictions and developing recommendations for language for potential adoption by the Council. A report would be due to the Legislature by December 1, 2024. The second proviso provides funding for the Department of Commerce to study potential tax incentives for Washington manufacturers and suppliers that provide low-carbon products for projects built in Washington. A report would be due to the Legislature by December 1, 2024.

These provisos have been submitted for consideration in the supplemental budget. We await the release of the budget to learn if either have been included.

## Navigator

**HB 1391** by Rep. Ramel creates a statewide building energy upgrade navigator program. This bill would help communities access incentive programs and clean energy funding through a central hub for energy efficiency, electrification programs, and funding. The “Navigator” would also connect communities to certified installers and energy auditors, prioritizing women and minority owned contractors, as well as provide community outreach and education, targeted to pollution– overburdened communities. Originally introduced in the 2023 session, the Navigator has been retained in present status in the House Rules Committee for 2024. It is currently awaiting a Rules pull to advance.

## Home Energy Score

**HB 1433** is yet another priority bill returning from the 2023 session. HB 1433 lays out a path to standardized residential energy reports based on US Dept of Energy’s Home Energy Score and produced by Home Energy Auditors. Providing a standardized home energy report allows residents to better understand and plan for their monthly energy use. Further, these reports provide valuable information regarding which home renovations or equipment replacements would help lower their electric/gas bills. This bill passed out of the policy committee during the second week of session and is now awaiting the chance to be heard on the House Floor.

# Livability Legislation

## Transit-Oriented Development

Promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) statewide is a priority for AIAWA this legislative session. We have convened a workgroup of members from across Washington to help inform TOD legislation that works for our state's diverse communities. **HB 2160**, which aims to increase housing density and affordability in areas around transit stations, has passed out of fiscal committee and is currently sitting in Rules awaiting the opportunity to be heard on the floor. Unfortunately, the Senate companion bill is no longer advancing this session. As the House continues to shape its version of TOD legislation, we plan to share our workgroup findings with the prime sponsors in both chambers to help craft balanced policy that recognizes the unique needs of different regions. Our goal is to promote sustainable, equitable TOD that enhances communities statewide.

## Neighborhood Cafes

**HB 2252** by Rep. Klicker seeks to allow small "neighborhood cafes" to open in residential areas, providing more dining options and conveniences for local residents. The proposed legislation would require cities and towns to permit these small cafes serving limited menus in zones that currently allow housing. To qualify, a cafe would need to have at least 500 square feet of floor space and no drive-through facilities. If a cafe opts to serve alcohol, it must also offer food. Additionally, cities and towns may require no more than 2 off-street parking spaces per cafe. Local jurisdictions would still have the ability to set hours of operation and other health and safety standards. This bill is currently in the Rules Committee awaiting the opportunity to be heard on the Floor.

## Residential Housing Regulations

**HB 2071** by Rep. Duerr directs the State Building Code Council to form advisory groups to recommend the changes needed to apply the International Residential Code (IRC) to multiplex housing and the changes needed to the International Building Code (IBC) to allow smaller dwelling units. It also requires the development of an illustrative standard plan set that meets or exceeds all energy code regulations for residential housing subject to the IRC. **HB 2071** modifies setback, height limit, and gross floor area requirements for retrofits and new construction, particularly those meeting Passive House criteria. Notably, it prohibits off-street parking requirements for projects meeting Passive House standards and offers flexibility for tree retention-related challenges in residential development. This bill is currently in the House Rules Committee.

## Commercial to Residential Conversions

**HB 2308** seeks to address the pressing issue of housing affordability by providing tax incentives for the conversion of commercial properties into multiunit residential buildings containing affordable housing units. Sponsored by Rep. Walen, the bill authorizes city governing authorities to establish a property tax exemption program, promoting the development of affordable housing for low-income households. We have been in communication with the prime sponsor and look forward to the opportunity to work with her to explore the challenges building owners face in the conversion from commercial space to residential space and create solutions to bring more affordable housing options to Washington residents. This bill is currently in the Rules Committee awaiting the opportunity to be heard on the Floor.



## Practice Legislation

### Rolling Clock

AIAWA is excited to be running our own companion bills this session to eliminate the rolling clock in architect licensure. **HB 1880** by Rep. McClintock and **SB 5794** by Sen. King seek to remove the rolling clock from Washington state statute. NCARB recently announced that it will retire its Architectural Registration Exam (ARE) rolling clock policy, effective May 1, 2023. Unfortunately, Washington is one of two states to have rolling clocks in statutes that need to be amended. Washington's rolling clock requires an applicant to pass all six divisions of the licensing exam within a five-year period. Extenuating life circumstances - from financial pressures to pay student loans, to family care obligations of many first-generation college graduates, coupled with lived experiences - can lead to the rolling clock becoming a barrier. NCARB analysis shows a disproportionate effect on women and people from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. Becoming a licensed architect is a substantial goal for many, requiring dedication, time, and resources. But dedication isn't always enough when work, family, and life come into play. Emerging architecture professionals need flexibility, and Washington needs more licensed architects to advance a healthy, safe, and thriving built environment. We are very pleased to share that each of these bills have been voted out of their respective chambers with unanimous support.

### AI Taskforce

This year the Legislature is looking at two companion bills to assess uses and trends, and make recommendations for the use and regulation of generative artificial intelligence systems. **SB 5838** by Sen. Nguyen creates the state AI task force at the Attorney General's request, amended to be run by a state agency-appointed executive committee, with subcommittees of interested stakeholders. It is currently in Senate Ways & Means awaiting a vote. Its companion, **HB 1934** by Rep. Couture takes a slightly different approach to task force composition, allowing direct industry representation. It is currently awaiting a vote out of the House Appropriations Committee.

## Call for Participation: SBCC Technical Advisory Groups for 2024 Code Adoption Cycle

The State Building Code Council (Council) is seeking members for the Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) in preparation for the 2024 code adoption cycle. 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). The 2024 TAGs will convene in March to begin review of the Group 1 codes. The review process will conclude with a report to the standing committees. The TAGs set a meeting schedule once convened.

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 **February 25, 2024.**

The state building code adoption process depends on involvement of the experts and professionals in the building industry. Please consider participating! If you have any questions, please reach out to the Council at [sbcc@ga.wa.gov](mailto:sbcc@ga.wa.gov).

# Capitol Connections

On January 23rd, members of AIA Washington (AIWA) gathered for an impactful in-person Capitol Connections event at our state's Capitol. With **33 engaged members** armed with talking points and cookies, we conducted **30 meetings with legislators** from **19 districts in Washington**. The day was a resounding success, and we extend our gratitude to everyone who participated. Now, let's hear a firsthand account from our new **AIWA President, Dave Buescher**, on the key initiatives discussed during Capitol Connections:

As one of my first duties as 2024 AIA Washington Council President I devoted two days in Olympia with my colleagues and fellow AIA members, talking with our state legislators about crucial updates to policies that affect all architects and residences of Washington state.

One noteworthy focus was addressing the AIA Washington Council-sponsored bill that would align our state with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)'s 2023 retirement of the rolling clock. This issue is of particular significance in Washington, which remains one of only two states that have not abolished the rolling clock. Our efforts aimed to underscore the unique implications and challenges this presents for our emerging professionals. Our bill has been well received from both sides of the aisle and we are looking forward to the opportunity to celebrate its passage.

Additionally, our advocacy extended to the Energy Upgrade Navigator Program, where we emphasized its potential to significantly benefit residents of Washington state. This legislation goes beyond merely facilitating access to energy upgrades; it is designed to create a streamlined process to empower Washington state residents to find rebates in a single, comprehensive platform that will access federal, state, local, and utility incentives for homes and small businesses. This inclusive approach aims to simplify the process, making it more efficient and accessible for those seeking to enhance energy efficiency in their homes and businesses. Participating in Capitol Connections was a remarkable experience, and I am proud to contribute to these vital discussions that directly impact our architectural community and the well-being of our state's residents.

If you're interested in becoming more involved in your local chapter of AIA or AIA Washington Council, I'm always happy to have a conversation to share my journey and experiences over the years in AIA.

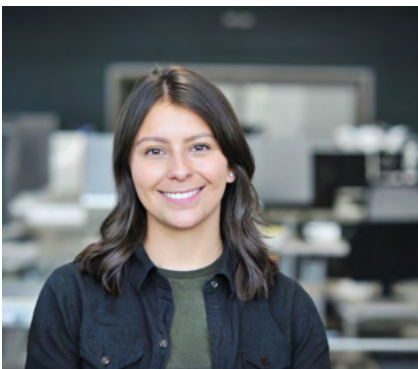


## Welcome AIAWA 2024 Board Associates



**Chien-Yi Chu**, Assoc. AIA, State/Territory Associates Committee Representative

Chien-Yi Chu, as a Design Professional with a background in landscape architecture, believes in a holistic approach to design, considering both building and landscape. She is passionate about creating meaningful connections between people and their surroundings through comprehensive spatial design. She is also interested in exploring the possibilities of architecture through high-quality crafts, in-depth research, and embracing cutting-edge technologies to boost creative energy and thinking. She hopes to create innovative and inspiring spaces that make a positive impact on the world.



**Karly Ennis**, Assoc. AIA

Karly recently earned her master's degree in architecture from Washington State University and currently holds an Architectural Designer position at LPR Architecture in Richland, Washington. When she's not enjoying her time at work, she loves spending her time with her two dogs and exploring different recipes in the kitchen.

## AIA National: Urge your Rep to VOTE YES on Restoring the R & D Tax Credit

The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 (HR 7024) was overwhelmingly supported by House Ways and Means Committee members when it was voted out of committee on Friday, January 19th.

The tax package contains provisions that AIA's 98,000 architects and design professionals support and care about deeply, which include:

- *Restoring the ability of taxpayers to immediately deduct their research and experimental costs paid or incurred during tax years 2021-2025 instead of requiring they be deducted over a five-year period;*
- *Reinstating the 12.5% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit ceiling for calendar years 2023-2025 and allowing states to allocate more credits for affordable housing projects; and*
- *Lowering the tax-exempt bond financing requirement and allowing more buildings to receive the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit*

We have heard from many of you whose firms have experienced financial strain and hardship because of the harmful Research and Development (R&D) amortization tax provision. Through our outreach to Congress and our allies, we have been steadily pushing for a fix. Now that a solution is in sight, we need your help to get it over the finish line.

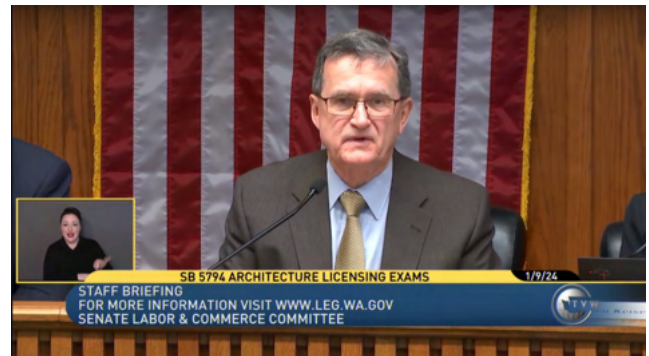
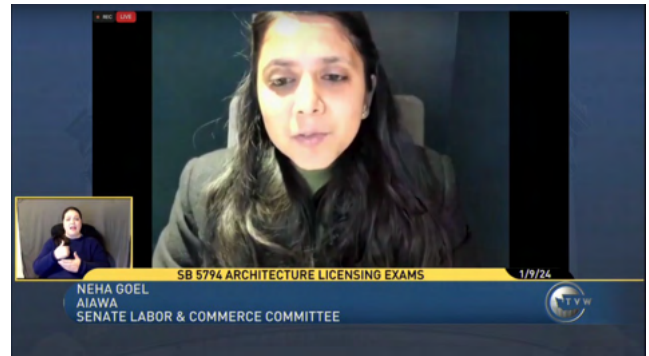
Please take a moment to call or email your members of Congress and urge them to support the tax package that includes the R&D fix. Not sure how to reach your Representative? Simply go to [www.house.gov/representatives](http://www.house.gov/representatives) where you can look up your Rep's contact info.

## Contacting the Legislature

There are many more ways for individuals to have an impact at the Legislature. If you are interested in weighing in on a specific bill, here are your options:

1. Email your legislators directly.
  - Email addresses can be found [here](#)
  - You can find out who your legislators are [here](#)
  - Remember to reference the bill number in your email
2. When a bill has a public hearing in committee, members of the public can register their option by:
  - Signing in pro, con, or other
  - Submitting written comments
  - Testifying before the committee via Zoom or in-person

AIA can help you navigate all of these options. The first two are particularly easy and can be done via the Legislature's online form. You will need to know the bill number as well as the committee where it will be heard and the date of the hearing. Reach out to [Samantha](#) if you need assistance!



## AIA Washington Council

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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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