



January 19, 2026

## Week two is heating up and looking forward to City Action Days

This week is shaping up to be quite the week—most importantly because we are hosting over 300 city officials for City Action Days! We are so excited to have our city leaders in town to learn more about the legislative process, engage with us, and meet with their legislators. It is going to be a great event. We are also happy to announce that Gov. Bob Ferguson plans to join us to talk about his priorities for this session.

On top of that excitement, this week is full of hearings on big bills that are important to cities. There are committee hearings on bills on local government revenue options, housing and land use, public safety, and transportation. You can read more about some of these big proposals and their impacts on your cities and towns below. We are also excited to kick off our first bill [Hot Sheet](#) of the session. Our Hot Sheet is our highlights version/cheat sheet for tracking bills of interest to cities. We will update it each Monday for the rest of the session. Please feel free to share it with your legislators for a quick guide of what we are tracking and weighing in on.

Can't join us this week in person? While we will miss you, that doesn't mean you can't still engage. Even if you can't come to Olympia, you can still testify remotely on bills, schedule calls with your legislators, and join us for our Friday City Action Calls. Everyone's voice is important, and we want to make sure you add yours to our collective advocacy efforts.

As always, if you need help or have questions, reach out to the Government Relations team. We are here for you.

Candice Bock  
Government Relations Director

## Hot topics

### Automated license plate readers bills scheduled for hearings

Automated license plate readers (ALPRs) have been a hot button topic in local governments across the state for several months. Senate and House policy committees are scheduled to hear bills aimed at regulating ALPRs on Tuesday morning. AWC urges cities that have been using this tool to share how important it is for public safety and solving crimes with your local legislators and through public comment during the committee hearings. [More](#)



### Bills seek to greatly expand AGO authority

A suite of legislation requested by Attorney General Nick Brown's office seeks transformative change that would expand the office's investigative reach and power. A narrow effort to expand the authority of the Attorney General's Office (AGO) occurred during the 2025 legislative session related to investigating police agencies, with AWC members voicing concerns about potential consequences. Thanks to outreach from cities, that proposal did not pass. The new series of bills takes a different approach toward a highly similar expansion, raising similar questions. [More](#)



### Homeless response bill emerges to allow camping in all public spaces

[HB 2489](#) seeks to prohibit adoption or enforcement of ordinances restricting "life-sustaining activities" on public property unless the city or town can demonstrate that (a newly defined) "adequate alternative shelter space" was available. Although the bill no longer contains the vague legal standard proposed last year of "objective reasonableness," it takes cities—and the state—back to 2019 by allowing individuals to camp in public, without restriction and at all times, and undermines the comprehensive programs now in place in cities that are working to end homelessness. Please reach out to your legislators and share feedback with AWC. [More](#)





## STEP housing bill returns

Returning in concept, [HB 2266/SB 6069](#) is the latest iteration of [HB 1195](#) from 2025. This year, the proposal focuses more on requirements or restrictions on how cities permit STEP housing types (permanent supportive, transitional, and indoor emergency housing and shelters) and does not include the dispute resolution components from previous years. The bill requires cities to allow STEP housing in all zones except industrial, many of which are not appropriate due to lack of transit or services. It also removes the ability for cities to require an operating agreement as a condition of permitting, which has proven critical for neighborhood acceptance of shelters and addressing public safety concerns. [More](#)

## Media time

### AWC video: Easing the indigent defense burden on Washington cities and towns

In this brief video, AWC Government Relations Advocate Derrick Nunnally covers the unique role Washington cities and towns play in providing indigent defense services, the challenges they face in light of new caseload limits set by the Washington Supreme Court, and how AWC is asking the Legislature in 2026 to ease the burden so cities can continue to support this constitutionally required service. [Watch now!](#)

## AWC bill tracker and coverage

Visit AWC's [bill tracker](#) for easy access to the bills you're most interested in and to filter by the information you're looking for, whether it's a brief description of a bill, the status of bills you're tracking, or AWC's comprehensive coverage.

**Tip:** [Bookmark the tracker](#) and check it regularly for the latest updates.

This week's bill highlights:

### Affordable housing

- Local option short-term rental tax bill returns ([HB 2559/SB 5576](#)) [More](#)
- Concerning permit approval bill continues to advance ([SB 5729](#)) [More](#)
- Permit-ready housing plans—feasible statewide? ([SB 6015](#)) [More](#)

### Broadband & telecommunications

- Expanding broadband access and adoption to those most in need ([HB 2365](#)) [More](#)

### Budget & finance

- Cities support proposal to eliminate requirement for annual lodging tax report ([HB 2120, SB 5879](#)) [More](#)
- Agency-requested bill clarifying implementation of sales tax on services scheduled for hearing ([SB 6113](#)) [More](#)
- Voter-approved single-city fire protection district bills are gaining momentum ([HB 2224/SB 6037](#)) [More](#)
- Bill allows fire districts to capture areas left out of EMS by voter approval ([HB 2326](#)) [More](#)
- House Finance Committee chair introduces a bill to bring cities more fiscal flexibility ([HB 2442](#)) [More](#)

### Emergency management

- New emergency responder bill mandates citywide policy reviews ([HB 2351](#)) [More](#)

### Environment & natural resources

- Common-sense approach to local government culvert permits is introduced ([SB 6154](#)) [More](#)

### General government

- AWC testifies on ranked choice voting bill ([HB 2210](#)) [More](#)

### HR & labor relations

- Favorable changes proposed to immigrant workers protections bill ([SB 5852](#)) [More](#)

- Employers face potentially costly addition to workers' compensation permanent total disability benefits (**HB 2372, SB 6067**) [More](#)
- L&I seeks to create PTSD pilot program (**HB 2405**) [More](#)
- Changes to PFML contributions proposed in response to IRS guidance (**HB 2345**) [More](#)

## Land use & planning

- Neighborhood cafe bill is back (**HB 1175**) [More](#)
- Bill proposes reforms to project permit vesting & permit shot clocks (**HB 2418**) [More](#)

## Open government

- PRA exemption for demographic data tied to personal identifying information (**HB 6123**) [More](#)

## Public safety & criminal justice

- AWC shares concerns over right-of-way civil liability bill with city consequences (**HB 2095**) [More](#)
- AWC testifies with concerns over the police face coverings bills (**HB 2173/SB 5855**) [More](#)
- Indigent defense task force bill passes out of committee (**SB 5912**) [More](#)
- AWC testifies against new mandatory restrictions on police volunteers (**SB 5974**) [More](#)

## Transportation

- Cities could contract with counties to lower street maintenance costs under new bill (**HB 1529**) [More](#)
- AWC seeks city input on traffic safety improvement bill (**HB 2192**) [More](#)
- AWC seeks support for bill to address proliferation of 'e-motos' (**HB 2374**) [More](#)

## Need to know

**Listening session on wildfire hazard mapping.** The Department of Natural Resources is hosting public listening sessions in 16 locations over three months to gather input on wildfire hazard mapping and ratings. [More](#)

**Recycling Reform Act: Service provider registration due January 31.** The Recycling Reform Act, passed in 2025, will bring important changes to how a city manages residential recycling services. Starting in 2030, packaging producers will reimburse service providers for their costs in providing collection and processing of residential paper and packaging. To be eligible for reimbursement, service providers need to register with the Department of Ecology. [More](#)

## Advocacy corner

### Friday City Action Calls every week (city members only)

During the legislative session, AWC hosts Friday City Actions calls every week at 12:30 pm. In these meetings, AWC lobbyists provide the latest updates and city officials can ask questions and provide feedback. [Register now](#).

### Make sure you are ready for City Action Days

Do these three things before you arrive:

1. Make appointments to meet with your legislators. If you haven't already, reach out now and schedule time to meet with your legislators.
2. Invite legislators to AWC's Legislative Reception. Ask your legislators to join you at the Legislative Reception on Wednesday from 5-7 pm.
3. Get up to speed on the latest information. Take time to review [AWC's 2026 City Legislative Priorities](#) and the latest news from our [Legislative Bulletin](#) so you are up to speed on the issues and ready for the latest updates.



Here are a few tips to consider when visiting your legislator in Olympia:

- Meetings during session are generally limited to 15 minutes, so prepare to be succinct in conveying your message. Legislators also tend to run late and leave early given their tight schedules, so be flexible and understanding.
- Legislative offices discourage and generally do not accept paper copies of materials. You can always show them your materials in person and then email electronic copies to your legislator after your meeting.

- If you can't get a sit-down meeting, ask if you can walk with them as they go to a committee meeting or if you can pull them out of a committee meeting or off the floor for a few minutes for a quick conversation.

## Need some advocacy tips to get ready for session? Check out our advocacy how-to videos

Learn some of the important “nuts-and-bolts” of advocating for your city directly from members of the AWC Government Relations team in this series of short videos that walks you through everything from how to testify and best practices for testimony to how to navigate the legislative web page.

- [Learn how to sign in and testify](#)
- [Best practices and practical tips for testifying on a bill](#)
- [Learn how to navigate the Washington State Legislature's website](#)
- [How to meet with your state elected officials during session](#)

---

[wacities.org/Advocacy](#) | [Legislative issues](#)

AWC's mission is to serve our members through advocacy, education, and services.

© Copyright Association of Washington Cities, 2026

[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

