



Government Affairs Committee Agenda

November 13, 2025

- **Washington State Legislative and Election Updates:** Jay, Roman, and Tarin provided an overview of the recent November 4th elections, discussed the unchanged legislative makeup, highlighted key races, and addressed the implications for business and policy development in Washington State.
 - **Legislative Election Outcomes:** Roman explained that the legislative makeup in Washington State remains unchanged after the recent elections, with competitive races in the 33rd and 26th districts resulting in victories for incumbents or appointees, and low voter turnout influencing results.
 - **Seattle Mayoral and Council Races:** Roman and Jay discussed the election of Katie Wilson as Seattle's mayor, noting her focus on housing affordability and limited attention to maritime issues, and mentioned the defeat of Sara Nelson, a council member supportive of employers.
 - **Implications for Policy and Business:** Jay and Tarin emphasized the ongoing challenges for businesses due to the current political climate, referencing the lack of balance in elected entities and the difficulties in influencing policy development, particularly for employers and the maritime sector.
- **Upcoming Legislative Session and Advocacy Plans:** Jay and Roman outlined the priorities and strategies for the upcoming legislative session, including participation in committee assemblies, Voter's Day in Olympia, and ongoing advocacy efforts for industry interests.
 - **Committee Assembly and Fundraising:** Jay described the legislature's interim committee assembly scheduled for December 3rd–5th, which serves as a time for agencies to present updates and for legislators to hold fundraisers before the pre-session fundraising freeze.
 - **Voter's Day in Olympia:** Jay announced the upcoming Voter's Day in Olympia on January 29th, encouraging members to attend, meet with legislators, and discuss session priorities, with ARBA and NMTA coordinating participation.
 - **Advocacy and Political Action:** Jay reported on recent fundraising activities, including a fundraiser for Senator Jesse Solomon and the distribution of approximately \$17,000 in Political Action Committee funds, as well as plans to attend caucus fundraisers and deliver additional checks.
- **State Budget, Tax, and Revenue Proposals:** Roman, Jay, and JMB discussed the state's projected budget deficit, potential new tax proposals such as a millionaire tax, and the

timing of revenue forecasts, highlighting the fiscal pressures facing the state and their impact on businesses.

- **Projected Budget Deficit:** Roman stated that the state is anticipating a \$4–6 billion deficit, driven by liability issues and other fiscal challenges, despite a recent \$9.5 billion tax increase.
- **Potential Tax Proposals:** Roman outlined possible new revenue measures, including a millionaire tax based on adjusted gross income, a payroll tax variant, and the return of a wealth tax on intangibles, with bill filings to be tracked starting December 1st.
- **Revenue Forecast Schedule:** Roman and Jay clarified that the next state revenue forecast is due November 18th, with the February forecast serving as the basis for the legislative budget, and noted the importance of these forecasts in determining future tax policy.
- **Industry-Specific Legislative and Regulatory Issues:** Jay, Roman, JMB, and James addressed several industry-specific concerns, including derelict vessel legislation, pilotage rate increases, unemployment insurance, family medical leave funding, and the impact of federal policies on state boating programs.
 - **Derelict Vessel Legislation:** Jay described a legislative proposal developed with Kitsap County to expedite the removal of derelict vessels, with initial support from ARBA, NMTA, and WPPA, while acknowledging that the measure is a partial solution to a larger problem.
 - **Pilotage Rate Increase Proposal:** JMB explained that marine pilots have filed for a 62% rate increase with the Utilities and Transportation Commission, which is under review and open for public comment, and highlighted the significant cost implications for vessel operators.
 - **Unemployment Insurance and Family Medical Leave:** Jay and JMB warned of potential increases in unemployment insurance taxes if the trust fund balance falls, and noted that the paid family medical leave program is underfunded, likely leading to rate increases or benefit changes.
 - **Federal Policy Impact on Boating Programs:** Jay reported that federal requirements tied to immigration enforcement are threatening the flow of funds from the Sportsman's Trust Fund to state boating programs, potentially resulting in severe funding shortfalls for boating safety and administration.
- **Committee and Association Updates:** Jay, James, and Bob provided updates on committee activities, association meetings, and collaborative efforts, including the Fish and Wildlife Budget Policy Group, Boating Program Advisory Committee, and upcoming conferences and annual meetings.
 - **Fish and Wildlife Budget Policy Group:** Jay shared that the Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking private sector support to address a structural deficit, following a legislative move that offset increased license fees with equivalent general fund reductions.
 - **Boating Program Advisory Committee:** Jay described challenges in securing federal funds for state boating programs due to new federal requirements, and discussed proposals to dedicate a larger share of the watercraft excise tax to boating program administration.

- **Association Meetings and Conferences:** James announced the upcoming WPPA annual conference and staff changes, while Bob reported strong attendance for ARBA's annual meeting and plans to address future challenges; Jay also mentioned the successful Marine and Boatyard conference and upcoming BC convention.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Derelict Vessel Legislation Support:** Work to support the Kitsap County derelict vessel legislative proposal, including reviewing language and coordinating with relevant stakeholders. (James)
- **Political Action Committee Fund Distribution:** Distribute the remaining political action checks to intended recipients prior to the legislative fundraising freeze. (Jay, Roman)
- **Voter's Day in Olympia Planning:** Finalize event details for Voter's Day in Olympia on January 29th, including room arrangements and member recruitment efforts. (Jay, Roman)
- **Monitoring Revenue Legislation:** Begin tracking bill filings starting December 1 to monitor for any new revenue or tax legislation impacting the industry. (Roman)
- **Pilotage Rate Increase Comments:** Provide information to interested parties on how to submit public comments regarding the proposed marine pilotage rate increase at the Utilities and Transportation Commission. (JMB, Jay)