



Board Caucus Meeting

Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 10:00am

This meeting was held in a hybrid environment

Meeting Minutes

CAUCUS ATTENDEES

Chair David Postman
Member Ollie Garrett
Member Jim Vollendroff (excused)
Dustin Dickson, Executive Assistant

GUESTS

Marc Webster, Director of Legislative Relations

At 10:02 am, Dustin Dickson announced that the meeting lobbies were open and the recording had begun.

At 10:02 am, Chair Postman convened the meeting. Member Garrett was present, Member Vollendroff was on leave.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – MARC WEBSTER

Marc Webster: Good morning Chair Postman and Member Garrett.

It's week three, we've officially passed the quarter mark of session, so the house of origin cutoff is in eight days. It will be a sprint for the next week, and really the rest of session. As always, if you have questions about bills you are particularly interested in, let me know, but for now I'll just go over some of the ones that we've been tracking closely.

Our agency request bills are doing well. They are scheduled to move out of the Policy Committees in both chambers later on today – the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee and the House Regulated Substances and Gaming Committee. No worries there as of yet.

Some of the other important bills we've been following include the Department of Agriculture's agency request transfer of the lab accreditation standards that are currently set to go to Ecology, to the Department of Agriculture – that is House Bill 2151. That passed out of Committee yesterday with an amendment that we're still trying to chase down. The amendment would remove the requirement in law that a sample tests above the action limit for something, then the entire lot from which it was taken has to be destroyed. In rule, there are a whole bunch of options in that scenario – (licensees) could remediate, they could ask for a re-test, they could do an extraction and if that passes the quality assurance test. So, removing that – certainly I, need to better understand what exactly that does and how it interacts with the rules that are currently on the books. Could be of concern, so we need to take a look at that.

In that same hearing, the out of state ownership bill which was scheduled for Executive Session did not pass out of committee. There's still a little bit of time for Executive Session, but it doesn't really look good for that proposal.

The adult entertainment bill is scheduled to move out of the Labor and Commerce Committee in the Senate on Thursday. It had been scheduled for today's Executive Calendar, but this leaves a little bit more time for amendments. We know we're going to see more amendments; we've already seen a couple of drafts over the weekend. We could see some on the House side too, as that bill – House Bill 2036 – is scheduled to move tomorrow.

The alcohol delivery bill from Senator Conway – SB 6122 – that incorporated several recommendations from our report on alcohol delivery – the 5448 report – was heard yesterday. That kind of divided some of the stakeholders, I think. The hospitality industry is very much in support, groceries and some of the delivery companies – Uber Eats, Door Dash, etc. – they expressed some concerns and are pushing for some changes. I'll try to figure out what those are and what we might support or not.

We're seeing a number of bills – and I think this is just going to be a perennial issue – bills that adjust how the dedicated cannabis revenues are allocated. I think the last change to that was in 2022. This year there is one that takes a portion from the general fund, which is just about a third of that revenue, one proposal will send that to local governments and really try and focus that on local law enforcement. There's another bill that would take that same portion, 32%, and move it to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for providers. Lots of different thinking on those. Those were originally referred to Labor and Commerce. Labor and Commerce has just moved them without recommendation, so this moved to Ways and Means and will be taken up there.

That's what I've got for this week, thank you.

Chair Postman: On that one, we don't normally get involved in where the money goes...

Mr. Webster: Right.

Chair Postman: ...unless there's some policy implication that would suffer.

Mr. Webster: We've gently provided some feedback if there are some drafting errors, we've definitely seen some that don't quite work. But in this case it's just policy and we've been neutral. If you'd like to weigh in, let me know.

Chair Postman: No, we don't need to pick fights.

Another I wanted to ask you about is Senate Bill 6209, which is the hemp bill.

Mr. Webster: Hemp in food, yes.

Chair Postman: What is the status, and what have we said about it, if anything.

Mr. Webster: Not a whole lot. We originally saw an earlier bill from Senator Hasegawa, SB 6077, which looked fine to us. 6209 I think was heard in the Agriculture Committee. We did not take a position on that, I think we're going to be watching those bills like a hawk just to make sure they aren't amended in a way that could interfere with or conflict with the THC bill from last year, 5367, which creates the definition of a hemp consumable. As written right now, 6209 didn't seem objectionable, but it wouldn't take a whole lot to perhaps make it so.

Chair Postman: Right. I think its worth watching. It was not agency request, so we can't advocate for it directly. But, from my view as I understand, as written it gets to what I think is important to me a least – you'll remember last year when we had our THC bill, there were some that said: "this is going to kill the hemp industry in Washington State". I said that was not our intention. This seems to help mitigate some of that rhetoric, maybe, because I'm not sure it really was ever true. I guess, just personally, I think if that bill moves cleanly it helps us in implementing the THC bill, and we can say "this, we won't worry about". I'm not the expert, so correct me if I'm wrong, but it just seems like it would help channel a piece of this activity into a new non-impairing way.

Mr. Webster: Right.

Chair Postman: That's what is key to me, is that is clearly below detectable level – non-impairing – just the layperson's word. If it doesn't get you high, we're not going to worry about it.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10am.

Minutes approved this 31st day of January, 2024.



David Postman
Board Chair



Ollie Garrett
Board Member

Not Present

Jim Vollandroff
Board Member

Minutes Prepared by: Dustin Dickson, Executive Assistant to the Board