

Representative Jeff Morris

40th District 2012 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



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COMMITTEES

- Transportation
- Environment
- Technology, Energy & Communications



Dear Neighbors,

While it is truly an honor to represent you in Olympia, the last two years have been as difficult as any we have faced. The dramatic rebasing of the size and scope of our state government is unprecedented in our state's history - \$10 billion in spending cuts. Combined with the amount of control special interest groups and their money have exerted both in candidate and initiative elections, a win or lose mentality took root in Olympia the past two years. I've always fought for win-win outcomes looking for what would benefit the most citizens of our area and State. This put me in a minority in my own partisan caucus.

The attitude that you have to lose so I can win, led us to a special session after our normal 60-day session adjourned. We did finally get to a budget that represented our core values of protecting K-12 and higher education funding from any further cuts.

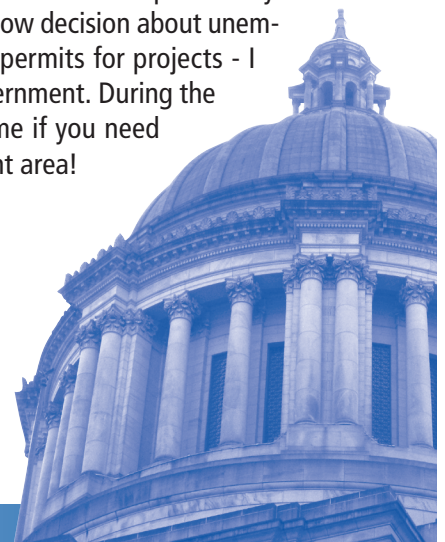
This report will cover items in more detail, but in the rubble of the past two years we have seen some victories:

- I was able to fight for and, for the first time, get acknowledgement that Western Washington University (WWU) is the most efficient in terms of costs of educating and graduating students. WWU was cut less than other universities in our state because of this.
- A decade long trail of blood, sweat and tears in getting new ferries constructed continued with keeping funding in place for the 2nd new 144 car ferry — we still need at least two more!
- I continued my long term work on breaking down barriers to new cleaner energy technologies. I am still frustrated with our State Senate being the place where lobbyists wait to ambush enterprising legislation that does not have paid lobbyists working for it. We still made progress on several tweaks to how we approach maturing new energy resources over the next 100 years.

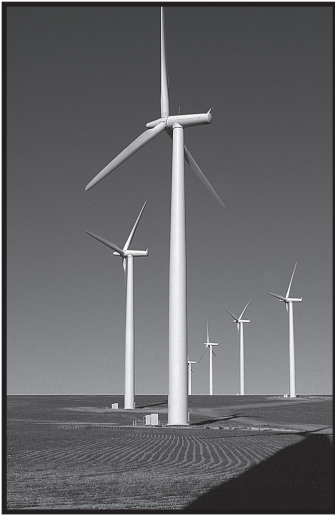
Many of you and your neighbors have come to me with problems you face with state government. Whether it is a slow decision about unemployment benefits, injured worker issues or permits for projects - I am here to be your ombudsman to state government. During the interim I hope you will continue to call on me if you need help. Enjoy the rest of 2012 in our magnificent area!

Sincerely,

Jeff Morris



Renewable energy at work: Jobs for our green future



As a long-term leader of the House Technology, Energy and Communications Committee, I've worked on legislation to streamline and incentivize the use of alternative energy sources for the past several sessions. Clean energy is vital to our state's environmental future, and it is a real bright spot in our state's economic recovery. Improving our state's policies

with regards to clean energy will preserve the unique beauty of the Pacific Northwest for our children's children, while creating much-needed family wage jobs.

This year I introduced a few bills to incentivize the use of alternative energy for homes, businesses, and local governments in Washington. One was able to reach the Governor's desk. The other two were passed by the House of Representatives, but failed to clear the Senate.

The Senate has remained a persistent hurdle for clean energy projects. While they refuse to take up meaningful legislation, the nation and world is passing us by.

Expanding alternative energy options

Like many of you do, I choose to support green power through my electric utility. The way state law is currently written, thermal energy, a promising and developing technology that will help store alternative energy, is not included. This bill allows for thermal energy to qualify for renewable energy credits, and will bolster the industry and improve the popular green power industry. This bill was signed into law by the Governor.

Opportunities for energy efficiency

In another attempt to give local utilities new options for promoting clean energy, I sponsored legislation to allow electric utilities to voluntarily set up programs for customers to choose to support energy improvement projects on their bill. Energy efficiency is a key part of our state's energy goals- good for the environment and helps to reduce our future energy needs. This bill passed the House unanimously, but didn't get voted out of the Senate.

Cutting red tape on energy projects

I also sponsored a bill to knock down a barrier for developers of smaller scale biofuel processing facilities. The measure would have allowed for larger biofuel operations to do their siting process through the state's energy siting council. Permitting energy facilities can strain local resources where there might not be expertise, and this bill would give facilities the option of going through the state council. This change would have improved efficiency for both local governments and developers, but it also failed to get out of the Senate.

I'll continue to support these common-sense changes, and look forward to getting them to the Governor's desk in coming sessions.



Rep. Morris meets with educators from across the 40th LD in Olympia.



Rep. Morris with Skagit, Whatcom and San Juan Conservation District leaders.

012 SESSION REPORT



Rebuilding and revitalizing our state's ferry system

In the final hours of the regular legislative session, the House of Representatives approved our supplemental transportation budget. The transportation budget made critical investments in the ferry system, and these dollars will protect tens of thousands of jobs statewide.

I am thrilled to report that the transportation budget included funding for the Sidney run, which as most of you know had been previously on the chopping block. Furthermore, the budget included language that directs the Department of Transportation to explore the possibility of a private contractor taking over the run.

In addition to preserving the Sidney Run, the transportation budget funds the construction of second 144-car ferry which will be assigned to the San Juan Islands route. As a whole, the budget contains no additional service cuts to ferries or increases in fares.

Apart from ferry-related provisions, the budget provides for critical transportation infrastructure and increased highway safety statewide. According to non-partisan staff, the package will create over 43,000 new jobs.

Public-private partnerships bring real results for Washingtonians



It's no secret that no region builds airplanes better than right here in Washington, and Boeing's most recent employment figures are a reflection of that fact. The company reported employing 82,325 Washingtonians in February, a twelve year high. In fact, Boeing has added almost 9,000 workers to their payroll since the end of 2010 alone. Growing demand for products and the development of new airliners, like the 737 Max, have meant an increase in both manufacturing and engineering work.

We've worked hard to develop a strong public-private partnership with Boeing by championing new investments, funding and reforms to foster growth and create jobs in the aerospace industry. Some of the results include workforce development scholarships and grants to train

aerospace workers, aerospace training programs through state community and technical colleges, streamlined permitting processes for Boeing and its aerospace partners, and reforms at Labor and Industries and the Employment Security Department to reduce premium rates for worker's compensation and unemployment insurance.

Throughout my career I've been a strong supporter of partnerships between the public and private sector for one simple reason: they deliver real results. We don't have to look very far to see the benefits of cooperation between the business community and state government, as well as the federal government.

Back in December, Washington's Federal Aviation Administration Center for Excellence's research on advanced composite materials led to the certification of Boeing's 787. Following the Center for Excellence's lead, I, along with seatmates Senator Ranker and Representative Lytton, called for the creation of the Washington Center for Marine Innovation.

The Washington Center for Marine Innovation would partner technical skill centers, colleges, universities, marine crafter builders, engine manufacturers, and the biofuel/alternative fuel industry. The center would facilitate research, education, training, and technology transfer in advanced materials through conferences, workshops, seminars, and technical reviews. As an added benefit, these projects would provide research opportunities that would put students in contact with potential employers.

As we all know, our state has a vital interest in promoting the maritime sector because it provides much-needed jobs in our coastal communities. Additionally, breakthroughs in maritime technology will reduce the costs of our vital state ferry system.

I will continue to advocate for the Washington Center for Marine Innovation in Olympia, as well as supporting effective and responsible partnerships between the public and private sectors. More often than not our goals are similar and cooperation can make Washington a better place to live and work.

Representative Jeff Morris


Fighting for the Skagit River basin



Rep. Morris celebrating the Anacortes to Sidney ferry run with Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell and others.

The Skagit and Samish River Basins are precious natural resources that nurture our farmland, our fisheries and our shellfish production as well as providing drinking water to our towns and rural districts. This session there was legislation that would have opened up several sections of water law to solve a problem impacting a very small number of people. The proposed legislation would have had negative impacts to habitat for endangered salmon runs and would have set a precedent for allowing groundwater withdrawals in an already closed basin that prioritized one group over another. It could have created a nightmare of litigation over historic water allocations.

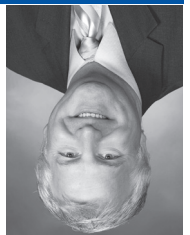
The best solution will be achieved by our local people working together to resolve these issues. Rather than pit one group against others, I worked to preserve environmental rules and funding for local fisheries enhancement groups and the Skagit Conservation District.

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Representative



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