

March 31, 2015

The Honorable Mark Schoesler, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Andy Hill, Senate Ways and Means Chair

Dear Senator Schoesler and Senator Hill:

We understand the Senate Republican Caucus plans to release its 2015-2017 state operating budget today, and that you also plan to hear the bill in Senate Ways and Means this afternoon at 3:30.

As you might know, the House Democrats proposed a similar schedule last week. House Republicans objected to the schedule, asking for more time to review the document, not just for themselves but for the public in the interests of government transparency. House Democrats agreed, and changed the hearing schedule to allow a few more days for public review.

As Jason Mercier of the Washington Policy Center said in an online editorial:

“Last year the Senate released its budget a day before the planned public hearing. We now have the House agreeing to provide the public three days to review its proposed spending plan before taking testimony. A major budget transparency threshold has now been crossed. Hopefully there is no going back to the days of public hearings on budgets still hot off the printer and the new standard will be to provide the public multiple days to review budgets being proposed on their behalf...”

We hope you will agree that more time to review these budgets is in the best interest of the people we serve.

Sincerely,



Pat Sullivan
House Majority Leader



Frank Chopp
Speaker of the House