

Stay in Touch



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- Committees:**
- Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs (Chair)
  - Environment, Energy & Technology (Vice-Chair)
  - Transportation
  - Joint Legislative Audit Review (JLARC)



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- Committees:**
- Agriculture & Natural Resources
  - Appropriations
  - Environment & Energy
  - Rules



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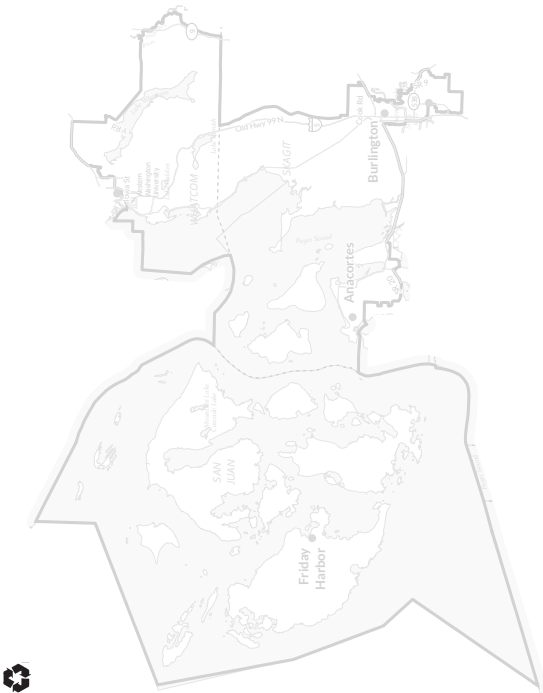
- Committees:**
- Environment & Energy
  - Finance
  - Rules
  - Transportation

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Legislative Report to the 40th District

Sen. Liz Lovelett  
Rep. Debra Lekanoff  
Rep. Alex Ramel  
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Olympia, WA 98504-0440



LD40

LEGISLATIVE REPORT TO THE 40TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Neighbors,

After two remote legislative sessions, we were back in Olympia in 2023. We heard from the community, and we worked hard to create legislative solutions to the issues you care about- like protecting reproductive rights, reducing gun violence, and addressing our housing crisis. Out of the 2,156 bills introduced, 487 passed, 95% with a bipartisan vote.

We also passed our 2023-2025 operating, capital, and transportation budgets to fund the infrastructure and services you count on—from ferries and roads to behavioral health centers—we’ve centered our work around the health of our neighborhoods, environment, and economy. Now that session is over, we’re back home listening and working with you to find innovative solutions to the issues we face together.

Here in the 40th, we are fortunate to have engaged citizens who step up to participate in the public process and help us have an ear to the ground about what’s going on around town. Please keep it up and stay in touch- we couldn’t do this without you!

Thank You,

  
Sen. Lovelett

  
Rep. Lekanoff

  
Rep. Ramel

## Housing Stability & Affordability



**This session**, the Legislature collaborated with housing advocates and builders to address our housing shortage crisis. We worked across the aisle and rotunda to craft bold policies aimed at three S's: **Supplying** more units to increase a diversity of home options; **Stabilizing** rental availability and homeownership opportunities;

and **Supporting** those facing displacement, unfair costs, and evictions.

**Supply:** Thanks to new policies aimed at increasing our inventory, you'll be seeing more styles of houses - like rowhouses, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units - in neighborhoods across Washington. New software and support aimed at reducing permitting barriers will help lower cost and increase production.

**Support:** We know that providing the compassionate services and access to shelter folks need to exit homelessness is a top priority, and we've responded by building the capacity we need:

- Making record investments to expand grants for affordable and rapid permanent supportive housing in the Housing Trust Fund.
- Expanding emergency housing and rental assistance programs.
- Assisting with weatherization upgrades to reduce energy costs for low-income households.
- Investing in successful local programs already in our communities to reduce youth homelessness.

**Stabilize:** Keeping people safe from eviction is solid public health policy. We strengthened protections for renters and created historic new paths to homeownership in 2023. We also expanded property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and seniors on a fixed income so they can stay in their homes.

**The work ahead:** Next year, we will build upon these successes to provide more housing options near transit and to stabilize rising rents for tenants.



## Turning the Tide on Climate Change



**Protecting wildlife:** As an emblematic symbol of the health of Washington's ecosystems, we passed legislation requiring marine vessels to refrain from approaching within 1,000 yards of our remaining 73 southern resident killer whales. **This was truly a 40th LD "Dream Team" effort and we're proud to stand up with you for these iconic animals.**

**This year's** budgets continued to invest in salmon restoration by supporting stream health and biodiversity, reducing toxins, and increasing fish passage. We will continue to work cooperatively on restructuring policies that will improve salmon recovery plans around the state.

**The built environment:** Starting next year, the state will require and support cities and counties in their next comprehensive plan update to respond to the impacts of climate change — like flooding, wildfire, and sea level rise — as well as including salmon recovery and protection, such as setting a standard of net ecological gain. This GMA review includes a public process that will help us prepare for the future while addressing historic harms, and creating the blueprint for the livable, walkable neighborhoods Washingtonians need and deserve.

**Did you know** that buildings with central heating systems account for 27% of statewide emissions? By investing in more efficient infrastructure to power facilities — such as the newly funded district energy system at WWU — we can help cut the emissions and impact of buildings now and into the future.

**Energy Permitting & Electrification:** The demand for renewable energy continues to grow as we decarbonize our economy and electrify homes and transportation. Recently passed laws ask utility companies to coordinate in planning for the expansion of a consistent, reliable grid and transmission network. We also improved the permitting processes and tax structure for clean energy projects, which in turn creates more jobs, local revenue, and increased economic output in communities across Washington.

**The work ahead:** We made progress this year on the recycling of batteries and wind turbine blades, but we'll continue to press for better packaging and improved efficiency in our waste management system.

## Investing in our Communities



**Our state budgets** are living documents that put our money where our priorities lay. In addition to record investments in getting folks trained locally for high-demand fields — such as maritime, nursing, behavioral health, and law enforcement — we were proud to secure dedicated funds for many local projects to support the people and environment of the 40th Legislative District, including:

- Behavioral health crisis centers in Skagit and Whatcom Counties
- Funding for the Mount Vernon and San Juan County libraries
- Increasing oil spill response capabilities in Friday Harbor
- A new commercial pump-out station and revitalization of T-Dock at Port of Anacortes
- Affordable housing fund design and site work with Kulshan View Housing
- Finalizing the land acquisition of Eijdos Farm

**The work ahead:** Many of our school districts in the 40th have been impacted by the state's levy formula, leaving them with deep budget deficits. We'll keep fighting for our schools to achieve funding parity. Additionally, we know that ferry service in the San Juans has been an enormous challenge for



residents. We stand committed to ensuring that the resources are there for staffing and vessels into the future.

### DO YOU QUALIFY?

In 2021, we were proud to vote for the Working Families Tax Credit. With it, individuals and families can receive rebates up to \$1,200, and it is estimated to help over 400,000 Washingtonians this year. Check if you qualify at <https://workingfamiliescredit.wa.gov>.