

# Budget and Energy Bills Coming Up

By Gordon Schultz

OLYMPIA — (UPI) — Budget and energy bills are moving into focus this week as the Washington Legislature nears the halfway point of the 1980 regular session.

More than a dozen bills making up various bits and pieces of Gov. Dixy Lee Ray's proposed \$62.7 million supplemental budget are coming up for floor action in the House.

But Senate Ways and Means Chairman Hubert Donohue, D-Dayton, says he is not impressed with the piecemeal approach.

The co-chairmen of the House Appropriations Committee, Democrat Alan Thompson of Kelso and Republican Gary Nelson of Edmonds, said the committee decided to act on separate bills so legislators could tackle each area of additional spending on its own merit.

Differences between the House and Senate could produce a confrontation over additional spending similar to the one that engulfed both sides in controversy over the governor's proposed spending level last year.

Most of the initial spending bills up for House consideration deal with relatively minor additions. The biggest area of contention deals with adult corrections.

The governor requested an additional \$10.7 million for prisons but the House committee slashed her request back to \$4.2 million.

A decision to eliminate a \$2.4 million item for converting the Cedar Creek Youth Camp in south Thurston County to a center for adult offenders accounted for the largest single reduction.

Social and Health Services Secretary Gerald Thompson blasted the cutback, saying it was stupid and based on misinformation. But several Democrats on the House committee defended the decision and said Thompson exceeded legislative authority to make the conversion.

They said he was trying to make a double dip into the state treasury to change a program that was already funded.

At the end of the session's fourth week, a number of energy issues were beginning to percolate in Senate as well as the House.

The governor's proposal to create a new Department of Energy drew a cold reception in the House Energy Committee where legislators questioned the value of spending nearly \$1 million more to catalog forecasts of state energy supplies.

Committee consideration of the House-approved proposal to ban nuclear waste from out of state is expected in the Senate.

A Senate-passed measure providing tax exemptions aimed at encouraging the production of gasohol is pending in the House.

A bill exempting alternate energy sources and conservation materials such as heat pumps, insulation, thermal windows and fireplace inserts from the state sales tax has been sent to the Senate by the House while a Senate proposal to exempt some of the same devices from property taxes is pending in the House along with a similar House version.

There were also signs that the Senate may be moving closer to action on a House measure directing the governor to seek assistance of the state's congressional delegation in obtaining McNeil Island for potential use as a state prison.

The governor has repeatedly objected to the use of McNeil after it is vacated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons in October on grounds the facility is too old and too expensive to operate. She also says the island is unavailable.

But the 93-4 House vote that would require action to secure McNeil before the governor could spend money on a 500-medium security prison elsewhere has prompted several senators to take a closer look at the issue.

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