

Talking Points

Audubon Priorities 2017



CLIMATE CHANGE AND PRICING CARBON POLLUTION

[SB 5127/HB 1555](#) – Introduced at the request of the Governor. Establishing a carbon pollution tax and investment program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, facilitate the transition to a clean energy economy, and invest in K-12 education and other vital public services. **SUPPORT**

[HB 1646/SB 5509](#) – Introduced at the request of the Alliance for Jobs & Clean Energy. Promoting an equitable clean energy economy by taxing carbon emissions and investing in clean energy, clean air, healthy forests, and Washington's communities. **SUPPORT**

[HB 1144](#) - Amending state greenhouse gas emission limits for consistency with the most recent assessment of climate change science. **SUPPORT**

Audubon supports these bills because:

- Audubon science states that nearly half of America's bird species are threatened or endangered by climate change, including 189 species found in the state of Washington. Carbon pollution from burning fossil fuels is the main contributor to climate change.
- These bills will establish a price on carbon pollution in Washington, requiring major polluters to pay for their greenhouse gas emissions, and driving down the use of fossil fuels. The income generated by this cost to pollute will help pay for education and/or clean energy and transportation, clean water, healthy forests, business and job growth, and assist low-income families and communities of color disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.
- HB 1144 updates Washington's carbon pollution limits to be consistent with the latest climate change science, and also accurately tracks carbon pollution from Washington universities/colleges (and their cost to meet emission reduction goals), and in-state wildfires.

CLEAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS

[HB 1048](#) - Promoting a sustainable, local renewable energy industry through modifying renewable energy system tax incentives and providing guidance for renewable energy system component recycling.

SUPPORT

Audubon supports this bill because:

- Climate change is the number one threat to U.S. birds, according to Audubon scientists, and to combat that threat, we need to end our reliance on fossil fuels that produce carbon pollution.
- This bill extends current financial incentives that support the renewable energy industry, and creates a solar panel recycling committee. In contrast to coal, oil, and natural gas, solar panels produce plentiful electricity without releasing any carbon pollution. Audubon supports renewable energy programs that help move us away from our reliance on fossil fuel use.

WATER RESOURCE CONSERVATION

[HB 1885](#) - Clarifying the roles of state and local governments in the regulation and mitigation of water resources. **OPPOSE**

[SB 5239](#) - Ensuring that water is available to support development. **OPPOSE**

Audubon opposes these bills because:

- These bills would overturn a recent State Supreme Court decision (Whatcom County v. Hirst) that protects the amount of water flowing in a stream and would allow wells built in new developments to impact water supplies for existing homes, farms, and wildlife, including endangered salmon species.
- Leaves rural water use unregulated, putting habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife, as well as for livestock watering and human recreation in jeopardy.

FOREST HEALTH and FIRE RESILIENCY

[SB 5546](#) - Concerning proactively addressing wildfire risk by creating a forest health treatment assessment. **SUPPORT**

[HB 1711](#) - Prioritizing lands to receive forest health treatments. **SUPPORT**

Audubon supports these bills because:

- Forest health in Washington is at risk due to an increase in catastrophic wildfires caused in part by our warming climate, and fueled by timber and brush build up in unmanaged forest lands. Hundreds of Washington bird species rely on healthy, resilient forest habitat to forage, breed, and raise their young.
- These bills will invest in landscape-scale, collaborative forest treatment planning and implementation, including the use of thinning and prescribed burning, to improve habitat health for birds and other wildlife, and increase resilience to wildfires. Funding to help communities prepare and adapt to increasing wildfire events is also an important components of this bill.

FORAGE FISH FOOD RESOURCES

[Operating Budget – Funding for forage fish surveys](#)

Audubon supports this funding because:

- Forage fish form a critical link in the marine food chain, providing an energy-rich food source for marine birds such as Rhinoceros Auklets, Tufted Puffins, and Surf Scoters. Over the last 30 years, there has been a dramatic decline in some of our marine bird populations and those that prey on forage fish are at the greatest risk.
- Funding to continue WDFW forage fish spawning surveys will help fill large gaps in our understanding of our regional forage fish populations. Simple information that tells us how many there are, and where and when they spawn, can help ensure that forage fish, and the bird, fish, and wildlife populations that they support, are sustained for future generations.

Talking Points

Environmental Priorities Coalition 2017



SAFE OIL TRANSPORT

[HB 1611](#) - Concerning oil transportation safety. **SUPPORT**

[HB 1210](#) - Strengthening funding for oil spill programs in Washington by increasing revenue to the oil spill prevention account. **SUPPORT**

Audubon supports these bills because:

- Crude oil travels through Washington by pipeline, trains, and tankers, and remains a serious threat to Washington's environment, communities, and economy. One oil spill in Puget Sound or along Washington's outer coast could devastate already vulnerable marine bird populations including the Western Grebe and Red Knot.
- These bills address a \$3.6 million funding shortfall for Ecology's Oil Spill Program, ensure that shippers pay for the cost of cleanup after a spill, expand opportunities for public input on pipeline projects, and protect Puget Sound by requiring all vessels have the best protections possible.

[HB 1136](#) - Exempting short-line railroads that haul nonfuel oils from oil spill contingency planning requirements. **OPPOSE**

Audubon opposes this bill because:

- Just as we begin to increase funding for oil spill prevention and clean up, this bill would exempt the transport of non-fuel oils from needing a spill contingency plan.
- Non-fuel oils can be hazardous to bird habitat; imagine a vegetable oil spill smothering shellfish beds and limiting food for migrating shorebirds. Non-fuel oils should be treated the same as fuel oils.

POLLUTION CLEAN UP

[HB 1663](#) - Concerning imposing a surtax on the possession of hazardous substances. **SUPPORT**

Audubon supports this bill because:

- The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) has been a successful law dedicated to cleaning up thousands of toxic waste sites, controlling pollution to protect clean air and water, and supporting the participation of local communities in addressing toxic pollution threats. However the law relies on unpredictable funding from a hazardous substance tax.
- This bill will solve a \$70 million MTCA biennial shortfall by applying a surcharge to the existing tax when revenues decline significantly. When funding is restored, the surcharge goes away.