



City of Bellevue

City Manager's Office

DATE: October 8, 2024

SUBJECT: Federal Legislative Update, September 2024

OVERVIEW:

After the August recess, Congress returned to D.C. to nail down a stop-gap funding bill to prevent a government shut-down, pushing Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 funding decisions and other legislative issues until after the elections. Congress will be in recess during October, returning to Washington, D.C. after Veteran's Day.

The lame-duck session agenda may be entirely dependent on the outcome of the elections. Beyond the expected federal funding fight, a few other bills facing year-end deadlines are likely to see some attention, including reauthorization work on the Farm Bill and, possibly, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Also expected is a push for additional disaster relief funding, taxes, and a final push to clear judges and other nominations before years end.

August and September highlights are summarized below.

BELLEVUE FEDERAL AFFAIRS

Bellevue's team was very engaged with the federal delegation during August recess, hosting or participating in several tours that featured some of Bellevue's federal priorities:

- A tour for Senator Murray's transportation and infrastructure Legislative Assistant, Jason Greene, covered the Grand Connection, Sound Transit 2 Line and Eastrail. Bellevue coordinated this tour with Eastrail Partners, Sound Transit and King County.
- Bellevue hosted two tours for Rep. DelBene. One focused on the Eastside Heat Pump Program and the other focused on Bellevue Police showcasing the Body Camera program.
- Bellevue participated in a tour with King County focused on the Eastrail I-90 gap project for Senator Cantwell's transportation and infrastructure Legislative Assistant, Naseem Mehyar.
- A tour for Rep. DelBene staff to share information about the Lake Washington Lake Lines project, Vision Zero projects in Bellevue, the Grand Connection Crossing over I-405 and Wilburton Vision. The tour was in partnership with Sound Transit (2 Line) and King County Parks (Eastrail).

Bellevue's contract federal lobbyist, Jeff Bjornstad of W2A, met with Deputy City Manager Genesee Adkins to continue strategic discussions on the City's federal agenda.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

Continuing Resolution (CR)

A CR was enacted to extend current year funding beyond the federal fiscal year deadline of September 30 to prevent a government shutdown. The compromise, "clean" CR bill (HR 9747) keeps the federal government running at FY 24 levels, with few exceptions and policy riders, until December 20.

In early September, House Republican leaders hoped to move a CR spending bill that would push current funding levels into March and include the SAVE Act, a bill that would require proof of citizenship to vote. This proposal was opposed by Democrats and several Republicans that objected to the length of the extension. The failed floor vote forced House Speaker Mike Johnson to switch tactics and put forward a bare-bones, short-term funding extension bill, without controversial policy riders attached.

In addition to extending FY 24 funding, the CR includes funding increases and extensions that leadership on both sides agreed was immediately necessary. These include:

- \$231 million in additional funding for the Secret Service to beef up security for major candidates during this election and to allow the agency to cooperate with the House task force investigating the assassination attempts of former President Donald Trump.
- Replenish the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund. The original House bill would have added an extra \$10 billion in disaster aid, but this was excluded in the CR.

The following policies and authorities are extended in the CR through December 20:

- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program;
- National Flood Insurance program;
- Homeland Security's Joint Task Force and National Cybersecurity Protection System;
- The U.S. Agency for International Development's Food for Peace program;
- Authorities to replace stolen or missing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to fraud;
- Several initiatives related to autism that were set to expire September 30; and,
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher program.

Several Veterans Affairs (VA) Department authorities are extended through September 2025, including the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program and authority to transport veterans to and from VA health-care facilities. A separate bill signed on September 20 by President Biden, allocates \$3 billion in supplemental funding to the VA for FY 2024.

Once lawmakers return to D.C. after the elections, they face the task of moving funding measures that get the federal government past the new December 20 deadline. It remains uncertain if Congress will try to move FY 25 bills at that time or pass an additional short-term, stop-gap measure. How the federal funding debate shapes up will likely determine election outcomes, including the president-elect and the calculus by party leaders of whether they have greater leverage in Congress.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

Congress moved ahead with the following key bills in September:

Enhanced Presidential Security Act of 2024 (HR 9106) was passed by both chambers. It directs the Director of the Secret Service to apply the same standards to determine the number of agents needed to protect the president, vice president and major party candidates for those positions.

Fix Our Forests Act (HR 8790) was passed by the House in a 268-151 vote. The bill expands authority to federal agencies to take preventative action against wildfires, including designating “Fireshed Management Areas” (areas designated as having a higher risk of wildfire exposure) and shielding some management measures carried out in “firesheds” from environmental review and legal actions. Groups such as American Forest, American Forest Resource Council and the National Congress of American Indians support this measure. Environmental groups like Earthjustice and the League of Conservation Voters oppose, arguing the bill lacks sufficient funding and would undermine local and scientific input.

ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCEMENTS & ACTION

Announcements

Gun Violence Executive Order

On September 26, the White House issued an Executive Order that: 1) directs federal agencies to develop guidance and information to schools about school-based active shooter drills; and 2) establishes an Emerging Firearms Threats Task Force that will issue a report to assess the threat posed by machine gun conversion devices and unserialized, 3-D printed firearms and develop an interagency plan for combatting these threats. For more information see: [White House Fact Sheet](#).

Labor Priorities Executive Order

An Executive Order was release on September 6, prioritizing labor standards and priorities for implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act and CHIPS Act. Federal agencies are directed to prioritize projects for receiving federal financial assistance that: 1) have a clear plan for, “... efficient project delivery by promoting positive labor-management relations”; 2) supply critical benefits that promote economic security for workers, such as paid leave and health care; 3) promote and expand access to policies that combat discrimination that limits employment in high-quality jobs for workers from underserved communities; 4) strengthen workforce development by expanding worker access to high-quality training and portable credentials; and, 5) promote and protect worker health and safety through policies that encourage supplemental training, worker and union participation in design and implementation of workplace safety and health management systems, and policies that disclose occupational safety and health violations. The Executive Order also establishes an “Investing in Good Jobs Task Force.” For more information see: [White House Investing in American Workers Executive Order](#).

Innovative Finance and Asset Concession Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) awarded \$49.46 million in grants to 45 local, regional and state public entities to support transit-oriented development and downtown redevelopment initiatives.

Clean School Bus Rebate Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the award of \$965 million to school districts to accelerate the transition of school buses to cleaner technologies. Several school districts in Washington State received awards including Issaquah, Lake Washington and Seattle school districts.

Applications for this year’s round of awards opened on September 26 and are due on January 9, 2025. Applicants can request up to \$325,000 per bus for up to 50 buses per application. Funds can be used to cover bus and infrastructure costs for awardees requesting electric school

buses, as well as eligible training costs for bus drivers, electricians, and others working with the new buses or infrastructure.

Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability grant program

The EPA announced the award of \$25.5 million in new grants to support drinking water infrastructure in underserved and small, disadvantaged communities. Washington State recipients include: The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (\$600,000) and the City of Waitsburg(\$570,000).

Funding Availability

Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program:

\$117 million is available from the EPA for several funding opportunities that advance recycling infrastructure and food waste prevention.

1. The Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grants - one opportunity for tribes totaling \$20 million and one opportunity for local jurisdictions totaling approximately \$58 million. To apply for the Grants for Communities an informational Notice of Intent to Apply is due November 15 and applications are due December 20. [NOFO](#)
2. Recycling Education and Outreach Grant Program will award \$39 million for the development and implementation of a national consumer waste food reduction campaign. Applications are due December 20. [NOFO](#)

In 2023, Washington State awardees of the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program included:

- Tacoma – \$2 million for the Recycling Education and Outreach Grant
- Seattle – \$4 million for the Recycling Grant for Communities to develop salvage wood reuse program
- Washington State Department of Ecology – received a State and Territory Grant award to develop and implement a circular economy accelerator program to support projects for waste prevention, reuse, repair, recycling and organics.

State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program

\$280 million is available through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for projects that support and strengthen state and local cybersecurity infrastructure. Deadline: December 3. [NOFO](#)

National Fish Passage Program

The U.S. Department of Interior has announced the availability of \$70 million for projects that restore and/or protect high-quality habitat for fish. Deadline: December 31. [NOFO](#)

Flood Mitigation Assistance Program

FEMA is making \$300 million available for local projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of flood damage to structures insured by the National Flood Insurance Program. Deadline: January 15, 2025. [NOFO](#)

Bridge Investment Program: Large Bridge Projects (over \$100 million)

\$9.6 billion is available from the Federal Highway Administration for projects to replace, rehabilitate, preserve or protect one or more bridges on the National Bridge Inventory. Projects to replace or rehabilitate culverts to improve flood control and habitat are also eligible. Deadline: August 1, 2025. [NOFO](#)