



## 2026 Legislative and Public Policy Agenda

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Cascade supports measures at all levels of government that enhance Cascade's ability to provide safe, clean, reliable water in a cost-effective, environmentally sensitive manner. Cascade's strategy is to develop and implement an overall legislative and public policy plan that will continue already established positive relationships at all governmental levels to further Cascade and its members' interests.

### FEDERAL

The plan includes outreach as appropriate to Cascade's Congressional delegation, as well as key committees, agencies such as the Departments of the Interior and Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Corps of Engineers. Cascade will seek opportunities to have a presence at key industry and/or policy meetings and events by staff and/or members.

#### 2026 Federal Agenda:

- Cascade Supply Program (CSP) Funding: Continue to identify grant and loan funding opportunities for planning, design and construction of the pipeline and associated facilities. Focus on preparation for initial advocacy in 2027.
- Mud Mountain Dam Operations:
  - Fish Passage and Barrier Structure: Ensure necessary funding is available to keep this project on track to meet federal biological opinion requirements and monitor project testing progress.
  - Multi-Purpose Study: Study the possibility of expanding the flood control purpose of the Corps of Engineers' Mud Mountain Dam to include storage of water for later use supporting in-stream flows, recreation and water supply with other key stakeholders in the Lake Tapps community.
  - Gages/Ongoing Monitoring on the White River: Continue Cascade's commitment to accurate gages and monitoring on the White River.
- Infrastructure and Study Funding: Continue Cascade's commitment to resilience (seismic, water quality, climate, wildland fire protection) and monitor water utility funding opportunities for infrastructure, studies, analyses, and forecasting.
- Water Affordability Programs and Funding: Monitor and support water affordability programs and funding. Support reestablishing and making permanent a Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program under the Environmental Protection Agency.
- PFAS. Cascade will monitor PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) legislation and rulemaking that impact water utilities, including wastewater and reclaimed water proposals,

and work with members on advocacy as needed. Cascade urges Congress and the Environmental Protection Agency to:

- Support a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) exemption for water utilities engaged in PFAS treatment and remediation.
- Support source control and manufacturer liability to mitigate costs to water utilities.
- Support funding for water utilities to comply with federal mandates regarding PFAS in drinking water supplies.
- Lead and Copper Rule: Track the implementation of EPA's Lead and Copper Rule and compliance requirements for members.
- High Efficiency Water Standards: Support legislation and rulemaking that promote high efficiency water standards for fixtures, appliances or products.
- Federal Administration Change: Monitor utility and environmental policy changes due to the change in administration that could impact water utilities and state policies.

## STATE

Cascade will continue to grow its strong existing relationships at both the legislative, executive and staff levels as well as with key water industry associations.

### 2026 State Agenda:

Legislative Priorities:

- Cascade Supply Program (CSP) Funding: Continue to identify grant and loan funding opportunities for planning, design and construction of the pipeline and associated facilities. Focus on preparation for initial advocacy in 2027.
- Cost Responsibility for Utility Relocations: Oppose any Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) proposal that would prohibit WSDOT from funding utility relocations, effectively shifting cost responsibility for state project utility relocations from taxpayers to ratepayers. Monitor legislation or other actions that might arise from the Public Works Board study of utility relocation costs. Support state funding for utility relocation costs due to state transportation projects. Support legislation that requires state agencies to identify relocation costs as part of the project estimate.
- PFAS: Cascade will monitor PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) legislation and rulemaking that impact water utilities, including wastewater and reclaimed water proposals, and work with members on advocacy as needed. Cascade urges the state to:
  - Undertake a complete financial impact analysis of any proposed PFAS regulations that incorporates a cost analysis for any treatment construction and operation, remediation, and disposal costs that may burden ratepayers with significant rate increases.
  - Support source control and manufacturer liability to mitigate liability and costs to water utilities.
  - Support funding for water utilities to comply with state mandates regarding PFAS in drinking water supplies.
  - Require the Department of Ecology to identify sites and locations of known PFAS contamination potentially impacting a public water supply system to be

classified as “listed sites” under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) to ensure there is a public process, including SEPA, which will include engagement of stakeholders in any proposed remediation plans, while exempting the public water supply systems from MTCA.

- Fluoride: Monitor legislation and rulemaking on fluoride as the State Board of Health responds to petitions and federal actions. Share information and advocate as directed by the Board.
- Affordability Measures: Support continued funding of the Department of Commerce Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) that reimburses utility connection charges. Support streamlining the program to reduce the administrative burden on utilities. Consider actions and/or legislation to allow utilities to address affordability issues, as directed by the Board. Support the development and state funding of a low-income household water assistance program. Review and track next steps from the Department of Health study of a state program for low-income assistance for water utility customers.
- Municipal Water Law: Support the Washington Water Utilities Council (WWUC) efforts to educate legislators and respond to the Department of Ecology’s revised draft policy 2030 that interprets the state municipal water law.
- Collection Flexibility: Protect existing authority and provide flexibility and new tools to allow utilities to work with impacted customers on payment plans to preserve the financial viability of the utility and avoid raising rates on other customers, including an extension of the ability to collect outstanding debt related to waiver of late fees and shut offs.
- Federal Administration Change: Monitor state utility and environmental policy changes due to the change in the federal administration and policies.

Legislation/Rulemaking Cascade is monitoring and/or supporting as appropriate:

- Promote Cascade and Members’ Presence at Legislature as Industry Leader/Problem Solver:
  - Review, and, if appropriate, support members’ 2026 legislative agendas.
  - Work with other agencies of which Cascade is a member – support and promote approved issues on agendas of groups like the Water Supply Forum, Washington Water Utilities Council (WWUC), and Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts (WASWD).
  - Support existing industry organizations – Continue to further common water-policy interests, legislative goals, technical fixes as needed, conservation, etc.
- Climate Change: Monitor climate change proposals that have implications for water supply planning and resiliency.
- Regional Resiliency: Support proposals that enhance regional resiliency and water supply reliability. Oppose proposals that hinder or discourage opportunities for regional resiliency. Continue to lead resiliency planning for members on issues as needed, including resiliency funding efforts by the Water Supply Forum.
- Milfoil Prevention: Support state action to follow the example of California and Oregon and restrict boater access to state waters without a boat inspection.
- Water Efficiency Measures: Review and support legislation that promotes high efficiency water standards for fixtures, appliances or products.
- State funding options for infrastructure and investments: Cascade will continue to monitor proposals regarding water infrastructure investments. Explore options to focus on water and infrastructure needs on the west side of the state.

- Initiate and Participate in Legislative Workshops and Committees: Cascade will promote responsible, environmental water use/regional governance at workshops/committee hearings.
- Monitor Other Key Industry Issues: Watch progress on pending or emerging issues.
- Tours: Offer legislators/staff tours of the Lake Tapps Reservoir to educate them on critical issues there.

## **MUNICIPAL**

Cascade works with all cities and counties in our service area and the Lake Tapps/Pierce County area and will continue to hold regular meetings with the Four Cities (Bonney Lake, Buckley, Sumner and Auburn), Lake Tapps communities, Pierce County and other related agencies. Cascade will continue to identify and address issues as they arise.

### **2026 Municipal Agenda:**

- Support Cascade members' legislative agendas as appropriate.
- On-going monitoring of King County legislation, regulations or permits that may have an impact on Cascade members, including the Regional Wastewater System Plan (RWSP) elements that involve reclaimed water.
- Ongoing monitoring and engagement in (Pierce County, Bonney Lake, Buckley, Sumner) local land use (comprehensive plans, shoreline management plans), stormwater, water quality and other issues that may impact Cascade's operations in the White River and Lake Tapps area.
  - Continue work on bulkhead study and engage with Bonney Lake on bulkhead regulations.