



# Effective Citizenship 101

Whidbey Climate Action  
Feb. 5, 2026

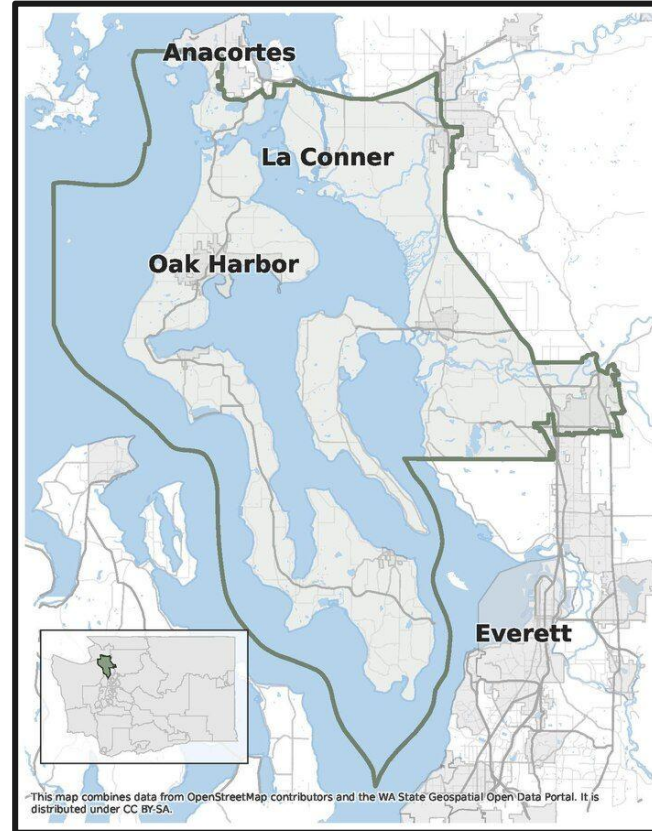
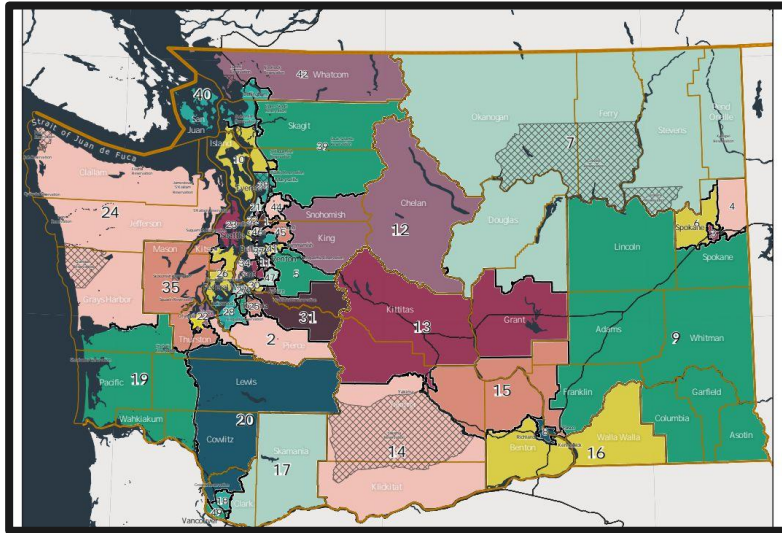


## Outline for today

1. [Washington State Government](#)
2. [Island County Government](#)
3. [Other Local Governments](#)
4. How can citizens effectively advocate for what we care about?



# WA State Legislators





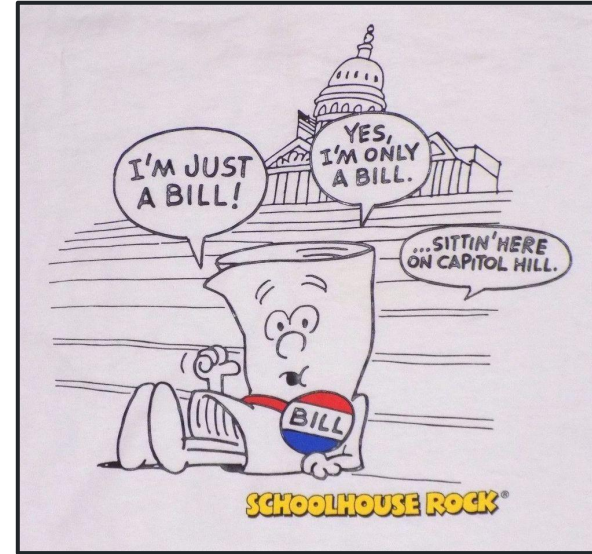
## Washington State's Biennial Legislative Sessions

- The state legislature meets every year beginning in January
- In odd-numbered years, they work out a two-year state budget
- This two-year period is called a biennium
- The budget year is longer and usually lasts for 105 days
- In the second year the session is shorter and usually ends after 60 days
- There are important cutoff dates for bill consideration during the session

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## How a bill becomes a law

1. Legislator introduces an idea
2. Is considered by Committee in public hearing
3. If funding is needed, moves to Budget Committee
4. Rules Committee schedules it for vote by whole chamber
5. Goes to opposite chamber (repeats process 1-3)
6. Moves to Governor to sign (or veto)



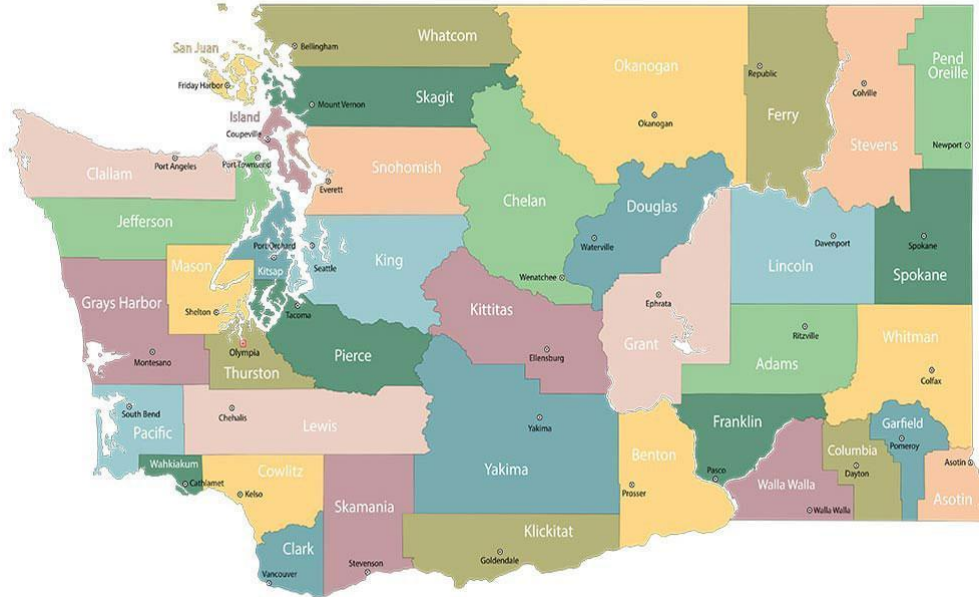
# Washington's 39 Counties vary widely

Population rank Comparison:

#1 King County - 2.3 mm

#16 Island County - 86,478

#39 Garfield County - 2,404



# Island County Government Structure

Subdivision of the state required to provide services through multiple, separate elected officials

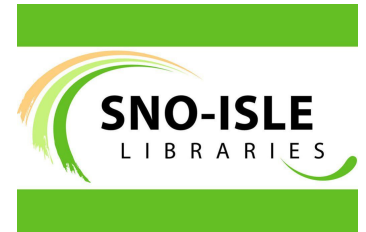
- Commissioners - Budget, Comprehensive Plan, Public Health, Roads, etc
- Auditor - Elections, Accounts Payable
- Treasurer - Collects and distributes taxes for all jurisdictions
- Assessor - Determines property values for tax purposes
- Sheriff - Patrol, Jail
- Judges - Superior and District Courts
- Clerk - Court records
- Prosecutor





## Other local Governments

- School districts
- Port Districts
- Incorporated town and cities
- Parks Districts
- Fire Districts
- Water Districts
- Diking Districts
- Library District
- Transit District



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## Where are decisions made?

### Elected officials:

State Legislative Committee meetings

Town and City Council meetings

Island County Commissioner meetings

Other local government meetings

### Community Advisory Boards:

Community Health Advisory Board

Solid Waste Advisory Board

Main Board Committee



*May we have your*  
**ATTENTION?**

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# Effective Citizen Advocacy



- Research & prepare - Gather facts, understand issues, document impactful stories
- Contact Officials - Find who has influence and interest in your issue
- Build relationships - With officials, staff, and allies
- Use technology - Stay authentic and leverage online tools
- Join groups & form alliances - Collective action amplifies your message



## Helpful Links

- <https://leg.wa.gov/learn-and-participate/how-a-bill-becomes-a-law/>
- <https://leg.wa.gov/learn-and-participate/how-to-participate-in-the-lawmaking-process/>
- <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/679/Codes-Regulations>
- <https://islandcountywa.gov/226/Board-of-Island-County-Commissioners>
- <https://islandcountywa.gov/209/Comprehensive-Plan>
- <https://www.vote411.org/>
- <https://www.lwwa.org/civics-education>