

Representative Mike Chapman - District 24

(House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Member)

February 7, 2023 ~ 8:30a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

There was a bit of discussion prior to Rep Chapman joining.

Maggie Franquemont:

Re SB 5517: I mean, it was something like 32 people signed in as pro and 560 signed in as con. A bunch of people testify on both sides, but I would say the majority were on the con side. Was definitely some strong proponents and they made some really good arguments. So we'll see where it goes. But I think even just letting Chapman know that it's a pretty controversial bill at this point is probably a good call.

Krestine Reed:

Some of us up here on the Peninsula are pretty concerned about what the Callum County EDC is wanting to bring. They have an idea that we need clean tech up here meaning we need server farms up here. And where they think they're gonna get the water I have no idea. You know, the problem that's going on in the The Dalles right now with water issues

Maggie Franquemont:

People really don't understand how much water those things take <laugh>. Yeah.

Krestine Reed:

Not to mention the utilities. I mean, you know power that it requires, so anyway, but Oh, well,

Lee First:

And I looked up House Bill 1215 Protection of Riparian Areas. Chapman is the sponsor of that. Yep.

Maggie Franquemont:

Yeah. And that one didn't make the list for Lobby Day priorities, but at CELP we are working on that as well with the Tribes. It's not as strong as we would like it to be, but it's a pretty good starting place. I know some of the Tribes are pretty upset about how they feel it is. Oh.

Krestine Reed:

Oh, why are they upset? What is the pushback from the Tribes on that bill?

Maggie Franquemont:

The tribes are pushing back on this bill in part because they don't feel it's strong enough because it's all voluntary. They want it to be mandatory.

Krestine Reed:

Doesn't have any teeth in it, is what you're saying.

Maggie Franquemont:

It has some teeth and I definitely think that for farmers that are interested in doing this work, um, that there's some pretty strong incentives in it. Um, I think even people who are on the fence about doing it, there's some incentives that are strong enough to pull them over, but it won't impact like the big agriculture folks that are the main issues. I know a lot of small ag aren't seeing this as like a, um, a super bad bill, but they also don't want it to be mandatory because for some small ag making the recommendations mandatory would basically put some small farms out of business because of the way their land is and the different riparian areas they have. So it's kind of a catch 22 where the people who are interested in helping will probably do it anyways, and the people who won't, won't.

Lee First:

Maggie, is there a definition of small farms? Is it like a land area, like acres or is it area?

Maggie Franquemont:

There's probably a definition somewhere, but I have no idea what it is. I think about it in extremes, to be honest. I think about it as like the small farms are the 40 to 80 acre farms that we see, and then big farms are the thousand and thousand acre farms. So I tend to think about it in very extremes, and where they actually meet, where something flips over from being a small farm to a large farm I'm not sure.

Lee First:

You know, it's really interesting and if Chapman doesn't show up this time, we can still have a good time here. So where I live, there's a lot of dairies and they're everything from a 12. Oh, we got Brady Hood on now.

Krestine Reed:

You know Lee, you were talking about a definition of farms. I also would like to see a definite definition of affordable housing, because it keeps on coming up. What with the price of housing on a sliding scale, what is affordable housing? I noticed there's two bills, housing bills that Representative Chapman is promoting in his email yesterday. Oh, there he is.

Water Lobby Session Beginning

Facilitator Greeting

Lee First

Participants Self introductions

Lee First, Becky Durr, David Linn, Krestine Reed, Maggie Franquemont

Lee First:

Oh, good to see you again, Representative Chapman. We are here winding up Clean and Abundant Water Lobby Week, along with Spokane River Keeper, north Sound Water keeper, the Deschutes Estuary Team, Center for Environmental Law Policy. I'm Lee first, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper. I work on the North Olympic Coast as well as the Chehalis Watershed. Today we have with us several of your constituents. Becky, why don't you go first?

Bill 1: Reduce Plastic Pollution HB 1085

Lee First:

So the first bill we'd like to talk to you about is the bill to reduce plastic pollution, HB1085. I think you're one of the sponsors for this bill, right?

Rep Mike Chapman:

I can't remember all the bills that I sponsored.

Lee First:

Okay. Yeah, you do have a lot. So we are in favor of this bill because we think it tackles a lot of plastic problems. Personally, I don't think it tackles enough plastic problems. I'm especially interested in the dock aspect. So this bill would prohibit foam docks. And the reason I am for getting rid of foam docks is I do lots and lots of beach cleanups. I just did one on Sunday and I find so many huge pieces of docs. Sometimes the pieces are so big we have to bring a saw to crack them in half so that we can carry them out. Do you know how you will vote on HB 1085?

Rep Mike Chapman:

Not yet. I still haven't had a chance to study it yet. Once it comes up for a vote, then I'll take a look at it.

Lee First:

Okay.

Rep Mike Chapman:

And I didn't co-sponsor it.

Lee First:

Okay. All right.

David Lynn:

It's a relatively modest ask you know. It tackles a few of the big problems that we have and doesn't look like it'll make any, create any major issues for anyone. So it's just pretty moderate ask. And so if you would take a look at that, we'd appreciate it.

Bill 2: Reducing PCBs SB5369 and HB1314

Lee First:

Yeah. Becky, do you wanna talk about the PCB bill?

Becky Durr:

Okay. I understand that you also have sponsored House Bill 1314. Just to refresh your memory, it reassesses standards for PCBs and consumer products. We need this because low concentrations, which have been allowed in consumer products can be magnified when released in our waters. I understand that PCBs in aquatic species are concentrated tens of thousands of times higher than the concentration in water. Removing these PCBs will make our water safer for all of us. For example, in my neighborhood, if I mulch my, what I thought was an organic garden with paper, I am probably releasing PCBs into the soil down to the water table. Into the nearby Stewart Creek, then the Wishkah River, then the Chehalis River, and then into the Pacific Ocean. And if the neighborhood kids make chalk art on the streets, PCBs and the chalk will end up in the ocean. I don't think we want this toxic result from our innocent use of these or other products. So we support this bill, and I'm glad you've sponsored. I wonder if you have any ideas about how we can support its passage.

Rep Mike Chapman:

Looks like it's gonna move through the Senate; looks like the Senate vehicles the bill, and have it scheduled for Executive Session to be voted outta committee today. Yeah, my guess is it'll move out of the Senate and then come to the House.

Lee First:

I just wanna say a quick word about PCBs. There's a lot of contaminated sites on the Aberdeen Hope Wind waterfront that are contaminated with PCBs. You know they do move through storm water. They're in these contaminated sites. They've been there for years. And, you know, if we don't stop adding to that pollution, like through the ways that Becky just mentioned, it's just never gonna end. I mean these are toxic chemicals.

Bill 3: Water Mitigation Bill SB 5517 (Foster Bill)

Lee First:

Moving on, we're gonna talk about the Foster Bill, Senate Bill 5517. We realize this is a controversial bill and while we do really appreciate your support of House Bill 1215, the protection of riparian areas, we oppose this bill because it will allow excessive water use when we're already spending millions of dollars on salmon recovery. I live on the Chehalis River. Last year I could walk across the river and it only came up to my ankles, and last year, was a drought year. The situation in our rivers is dire, and we are really afraid that excessive water use from streams that might be allowed by this bill would make the situation much worse. Would you like to say something about how you will vote on this bill?

Rep Mike Chapman:

No. Cause I have no idea what form it would ever make it over to the House. It came out of it bipartisan task force. It's a bipartisan bill, so I'll just see how it works through the Senate.

Lee First:

Mm-hmm.

Rep Mike Chapman:

I'm not as opposed to something like this as you are probably. We have housing shortage; houses take water, and we have to have access to water. We can talk about that all day long, but we'll see. It's a long journey for the Senate to get this bill out.

Lee First:

Krestine, do you have something to say about planning for future homes?

Krestine Reed:

I just have a comment regarding the Peninsula in Clallam County. Recently I attended a PUD meeting where Clallam EDC made a formal presentation with express desire to bring in industrial sized clean tech looking to take advantage of the Washington's cheap, clean hydropower. The benefit of family-wage jobs and affordable housing was promised to resolve all economic woes for the county. However, I'm concerned about water usage; what will cooling server farms do to the Peninsula water resources. The idea of having industrial size clean tech here isn't something I think we should be considering. And I'm afraid that a bill like this might help to promote that.

Rep Mike Chapman:

Well, you're right it will help promote it. And there's a lot of folks on the Peninsula that would disagree with you, that want more housing. I heard from a group yesterday out of Jefferson County, and they're desperate for more housing because we can't fill the nurse jobs, we can't fill the home care jobs, we can't fill the doctor's jobs. And people are retired and they won't have a care if the hospital can't fill their positions. And my son's a recruiter for the hospital, and the reason they can't fill their position is they can't find housing. So, you know, you're not gonna have a hospital if we don't have housing. You should sit in on the hospital meetings alone and the demand for services that they have and the jobs that are going unfilled because people can't find housing. So

Krestine Reed:

I don't wanna trade off housing for hospital employees at the risk of clean tech. I think that is my issue. I agree 100% about the issue with us getting people up here that actually serve the community. Bringing in industrial sized clean tech infrastructure and also building for that job force is a different issue, I believe.

Rep Mike Chapman:

Well, I couldn't get reelected to this job if I was opposed to job growth and housing. So I guess that's my number one priority for the district is new jobs, clean jobs, and housing. And that takes water.

Krestine Reed:

I agree. But I think it takes a little bit of focus on exactly what that means. You know? Exactly what growth, not just growth for growth sake.

Rep Mike Chapman:

If you look at the planning that I did as a county commissioner for 16 years, implementing the first water bank in the state, in the Sequim Dungeons Valley, the stream flow work that we've done, the critical areas ordinances, we put in place the water rights that have been protected for Ag Land for decades. And the fact that we will never have enough water to meet the housing demand, but to continue to lock it up, the water that we do have, you know, it's, you need, you need to do your homework of what we've already done on the North Olympic Peninsula to protect water. We're not running outta water ever, ever. We will never run outta water on the North Olympic Peninsula. We will never. We've protected so much water. It's a red herring to say we don't have enough water for a little more housing. The City of Port Angeles alone has more water rights that the city could double and they still have enough water.

Lee First:

Yeah. You know that might be true in that area. Precisely. Representatives, but you know, the Chehalis and many other rivers' water flows from the 24th district into the Chehalis, it's dire. You know, there isn't enough water there. So

Rep Mike Chapman:

Well, there is at certain times of the year in the Chehalis, cuz that's why we're spending 35 million almost every year for the Chehalis flood basin project. And we need more offsite storage. We need to store the water we collect on days like today. But we can have this argument all day long. I'm pretty clear on my position on water. We need access to it. We need to store it. We're doing the Dungeness Off Channels reservoir project. I'm not for dams, but I am for water storage. It's a resource. I have no idea, but we should be storing our water and then using it in the dry months. So, I got other constituents waiting. Do you have anything else?

Lee First:

Maggie, do you have anything else or David?

Maggie Franquemont:

I think we're all good for me, unless David has something.

Rep Mike Chapman:

No, we can't just close the door on the Peninsula and not have anybody else move here. That's my job to make sure that everybody has a fair shake to pursue the quality of life that they want.

Krestine Reed:

And, again, it's not about just anybody else, I think we need to focus on what that anybody else is. That's my argument. It's not who, it's what.

Rep Mike Chapman:

No, I mean, I'm, I respectfully disagree. This is America. We're not gonna pick and choose who can live on the Peninsula. Sorry,

Krestine Reed:

I'm not talking about people. I'm talking about industry, not people. I think there's, a huge difference.

Rep Mike Chapman:

Well, any industry that wants to build jobs on the Peninsula, I support, because we desperately need private sector jobs. And the hospitals will tell you we need private sector jobs too. So again, I wish groups like this could sit in on all the other meetings I have, because you'd hear a more holistic approach to what the issues are. They're not just single issues. The state is facing challenges, the likes of which we have never seen and never will see in our lifetime. And if we don't get this right, we are literally gonna have homeless camps from here to Aberdeen along the side of the road. People do not have a place to live. They don't have a place to work. They don't have the benefits. They're not eating food properly. And to just say we don't want to release any water to help these people is abhorrent to me. I'm frustrated that people do not care about their fellow man enough to say, let's get some housing built so these people can get a fair shake in life. And that's going to take a little bit of water. So, I'm sorry, but I, I'm dealing with way too many issues of people that are losing their life, living in cardboard boxes in the North Olympic Peninsula, because we don't have enough housing, we don't have enough jobs for them. And, you know, if you want somebody who will just cast those people aside, then you need to find a different person to represent you. And that's just the way it is.

Krestine Reed:

I'd like to clearly state that I don't think that's what we are asking. That is absolutely not what I am asking. This is taken on a different tone than what the original, my argument is. I think the problem is that there is not enough affordable housing, that is the problem.

Rep Mike Chapman:

And you need water, but you're opposing the bill that will release water for affordable housing.

Krestine Reed:

No, I'm opposing the bill that will release water for high tech, supposed clean tech industry that will take up the water that is needed for housing.

Rep Mike Chapman:

All right. I've got another group of constituents on another issue. All right. Thanks you guys.

All chimed in:

Thank You Thanks for your time. Thank you Representative Chapman. Thank you.

Rep Mike Chapman:

Thank you.

Krestine Reed:

Oh, one more thing. Could we get a smile and a picture? Okay. I got it. Thank you. Appreciate it. All right <a lot of laughing, Chapman was in good mood as we all were>

Rep Mike Chapman:

<laugh>. All right. Thanks.



Water Lobby Session Ended

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After session chat.

Krestine Reed:

I don't know how my argument got turned into housing. The Callum EDC is proposing industrial sized clean technology that calls for acres of land, firstly, then lots of power, and lots of water. Google refused to disclose how much water they use for computer server farms in The Dalles, calling it trade secret. One area has 17,000 people living there. Clallam has 33,000 registered voters; that's not including Port Angeles. So there's a big difference. Seems like a promise of affordable housing is camouflage or whitewashing for support. Perhaps we need more finite lines to these arguments. Sometimes it becomes hard to tell what the arguments really are.

David Lynn:

Well, I think there must be a lot of pressure about getting affordable housing. I think that's probably what he reacted to as he did.

Krestine Reed:

Yeah. I, thank you. So anyway, we're gone. Bye