

Noxious Weed Assessment Billing and WSDOT Workgroup

Final Report

Substitute House Bill 1355, Section 12(1)(b); Chapter 17.10.240, Laws of 2021
December 30th, 2022



Washington State

**Noxious Weed
Control Board**

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board

PO Box 42560

Olympia, WA 98504

Phone: (360)-561-4428

www.nwcb.wa.gov

SHB 1355 Noxious Weed Assessment Report

Per Substitute House Bill 1355, 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session, the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB) is tasked with reporting on the progress of this workgroup in the development and implementation of a system by which parcels owned or held by the department of transportation that have been declared to receive special benefit from the county noxious weed control board must be identified and all assessments may be effectively billed for payment according to the process in chapter 79.44 RCW.

Executive Summary

County noxious weed control board funding is derived from county general funds or by special noxious weed assessment. The process for establishing a county noxious weed assessment is described in RCW 17.10.240 1(c)(i). After a hearing, the county noxious weed board determines classifications of lands and noxious weed assessments per classification and then submits a proposed recommendation to the county legislative authority for the noxious weed assessment. The county legislative authority, after a hearing, then accepts or modifies by resolution all of or any portion of the proposed levels of noxious weed assessment. Previously there has been concern and confusion about how this assessment is billed to WSDOT. This workgroup was assigned to develop a system by which county noxious weed assessments for parcels are to be billed to WSDOT, per SHB 1355.

The main goals of this workgroup are to:

- Identify the needs of WSDOT, County Assessors, County Treasurers, and Noxious Weed Programs pertaining to the noxious weed assessment billing process.
- Establish a system for submitting statements of noxious weed assessment billings to WSDOT (Appendix A).
- Identify solutions to update DOT data.
- Identify obstacles or barriers to successfully develop a system by which to bill WSDOT electronically for the noxious weed assessment.

WSDOT Requests

WSDOT has requested that billings for noxious weed assessments be submitted with electronic statements. These statements can be in a simple excel spreadsheet format containing the following fields: parcel #, acreage or size of lot, amount of assessment. WSDOT can then use this information to validate the parcels charged the noxious weed assessment against their own records. This was discussed in detail throughout the workgroup meetings. RCW 17.10.240 clearly outlines the process by which the noxious weed assessment is to be established at the county level. Once the rates are established, following RCW 17.10.240, WSDOT shall be billed electronically. The determination of which agency, i.e. county weed board, assessor or treasurer, will provide the electronic document will be determined at the county level. The County Treasurer will continue to comply with RCW 84.56.020(2).

Local County Limitations

This group identified obstacles at the county level. Some counties may not have the proper or compatible software to export such spreadsheet files and documents. Also, departments at the county level may lack funding and resources to contribute time to developing new systems or processes by which to bill WSDOT electronically separate from their other assessment billings. It should be determined at the local county level which department, either the Assessor or Noxious Weed Control Board based on resource available, will take on the role of determining which WSDOT parcels are to be assessed, if any, for the noxious weed assessment based on land classifications. Each county is unique and departments are encouraged to work together to develop a system to meet the county's individual needs. WSDOT and the WSNWCB will work in continued collaboration with each county as they undergo the development of their own system and/or protocols.

There was some discussion about the definition of centerline miles and how to calculate the noxious weed assessment for right of ways. WSDOT suggested using the following assumptions for centerline miles based on road type:

“For consistency and ease of calculating assessment rates, we would like to propose the counties all use the assumption of 1 mile = 1 parcel, and that we have two width categories to determine acres per mile – the average width for any secondary/local distributor roads is **60 ft. width** and freeways/divided highways use an average width of **120 ft. width.**”

WSDOT also provided an updated excel workbook with the centerline miles that they have recorded for each county (not included in this report). After discussion with county noxious weed coordinators and this group, once again the formula for calculating the noxious weed assessment will be determined at the local level based on assessment amount and road type. The WSDOT suggested assumptions that may be taken into consideration. RCW 17.10.010 (5) states "Centerline miles" means the length of any given road right-of-way corridor in miles, along the center line of the overall roadway alignment." The language in RCW 17.10.240 (c)(i) states "...or, for rights-of-way, a rate based on centerline miles..." The above assumptions are only suggested as a way to convert assessment rates to centerline miles. The intention is not to add width to the definition in RCW 17.10.010(5). This was suggested to insure that the assessment on right of ways is fair and equitable and comparable to surrounding parcel assessments. Local county noxious weed boards may suggest alternative means for assessing right of ways. The Treasurers provided a very simplistic billing method that reduced the workload of the Assessor's office and Noxious Weed Board (please see example in appendix B). There is no need to create new parcels and parcels that existed that included road right of way would be deleted in this proposed Treasurers' process. The DOT may make a distinction on their data of different types of roads but the Noxious Weed Board (with the approval of the County Commissioners) still has final determination for the rate per mile they want to assess. The billing can be similar to the PILT like billing that Treasurers or Assessors do for the Fish and Wildlife parcels each year. There is no requirement that this assessment has to be on a tax

statement. Weed Districts may also be empowered to set a rate(s) per mile on DOT road right of way within their boundaries.

It was also determined that the data to update DOT records was not needed to be part of the annual tax statement being mailed out. The data DOT wishes can be given to DOT separately from the billing process and done much earlier in the prior year.

Conclusion

This workgroup shared examples of assessment statements along with WSDOT spreadsheets of types of parcels, roads, and holdings WSDOT owns and manages (Please see Appendix B). Overall, this was a very cooperative and positive group in identifying obstacles and solutions. Such obstacles included software limitations, resource availability, and discrepancies of records between counties and WSDOT. Solutions include establishing an electronic submission to WSDOT for the noxious weed assessment using very basic software. This again allows for validation by both the county and WSDOT, continued accuracy, and ease of updating any changes.

The WSNWCB will contact noxious weed coordinators in counties with noxious weed assessments providing a breakdown of the assessment process and examples of noxious weed assessment statements for WSDOT. The WSNWCB will offer support to the best of its ability. Moving forward, the WSNWCB will facilitate additional meetings, as issues arise. If you would like more details or have any questions, please feel free to contact Mary Fee, WSNWCB Executive Secretary, at mfee@agr.wa.gov or 360-561-4428.

Appendix A

Draft Example Protocol for Noxious Weed Assessment Billing to WSDOT

- I. County Establishes Noxious Weed Assessment (RCW 17.10.240)
 - A. County Noxious Weed Board, after a hearing, submits proposal of land classifications and noxious weed assessments based on those classification to county legislative authority.
 - B. County legislative authority, after a hearing, shall accept or modify by resolution all or part of the proposed levels of assessment.
- II. WSDOT Parcels Identified for Noxious Weed Assessment and Billing.
 - A. The County Assessor or Noxious Weed Control Board identifies WSDOT parcels, if any, to be assessed for the noxious weed assessment based on land classification. The department assigned to this role shall be determined at the local county level depending on resources available. Or:
 - B. Based on the detailed centerline data DOT provides, each year (deadline not discussed of when for this) for each road segment, the Noxious Weed Control Board provides the mile type, rate(s) and dollar amount to the County Treasurer or Assessor to create a PILT like bill to send with the tax statement(s) of other parcels that are not road right of ways.
 - C. Electronic information on parcels should include the following fields when applicable. This information may be submitted with assessment billings or at a different time to help insure accuracy in the data.
 1. Fields to be included:
 - a. Parcel #
 - b. Acres/ Lot size
 - c. Assessment Amount
 - d. Additional fields can be included such as : Assessment Rate, Township/Range, and any other information
 - D. Statement is submitted to County Treasurer for billing to WSDOT.
 1. County Treasurer finalizes billing statement as submitted (electronic spreadsheet may be provided by either noxious weed control board, assessor, or treasure depending on county agency abilities) and submits it to WSDOT.

Appendix B

Supporting Examples

Draft Example Billing- PILT Style

Date

State of Washington
Dept of Transportation
Attn:
Address
Olympia, WA 98501-1091
[Email:](#)

RE: DOT Road Right of Way bill

Dear:

Enclosed is the 2023 bill for DOT Road Right of Ways in Grant County. Below are the rates set by the Noxious Weed Control Board approved by the County Commissioners (and Weed Districts).

Based on rates given to the County Treasurer and the miles broken out for the Noxious Weed Control Board (and Weed Districts), the total payment for all DOT Road Right of Ways is \$_____. Also included are tax statements for parcels that are not Road Right of Ways..

Please remit payment of \$_____ to the Grant County Treasurer for payment of the weed, conservation, irrigation, assessments and the DOT Road Right of Way payment for Grant County. If you have any questions regarding this payment, please contact me at 509-754-2011 **x4253**.

Sincerely,
Darryl Pheasant
Grant County Treasurer

Ddp.encs

Draft Example Statement- Jefferson County Spreadsheet including both right-of-way and parcel noxious weed assessment

2022 Proposal based on HB 1355

Noxious Weed Charge for State Roads in Jefferson County

1 mile equivalency				County	Charge/Mile
1 (mile) = 1 (parcel)		Units		Rate/Parcel*	
1		1		\$4.00	\$4.00
Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Acres	Acres Chg	Rate/Acre*	
5280	60	7.27	7.27	\$0.30	\$2.18
				Rate/Mile:	\$6.18

* Passed by County Ordinance

State Roads	Start	Finish	Miles	Rate/Mile	Charge/Road	Remark	Parcel
SR20	0	12.56	12.56	\$6.18	\$77.63	Discovery Bay to PT	
SR19	0	14.09	14.09	\$6.18	\$87.09	Beaver Valley	
SR116	0	9.83	9.83	\$6.18	\$60.76	Hadlock to Marrowstone	
SR104	0	14.67	14.67	\$6.18	\$90.68	US101 to Hood Canal	
US101	274.65	314.63	39.98	\$6.18	\$247.12	East Co	
US101	151.43	184.62	33.19	\$6.18	\$205.15	Bogachiel to Queets	
US101	144.35	148.03	3.68	\$6.18	\$22.75	Clearwater	
Roads:		Total:	128.00	Assessment:	\$791.17		00000803

Facilities	Acres	Acres Chg	Acres Amt	Parcel Chg	Charge/Parcel	Parcel
Discovery Bay Shop	12.90	13	\$3.90	\$4.00	\$7.90	964503202
Mt Walker Shop	4.70	5	\$1.50	\$4.00	\$5.50	602111002
				Assessment:	\$13.40	

Land	Acres	Acres Chg	Acres Amt	Parcel Chg	Charge/Parcel	Parcel
Slide Area by 101/104 Int	7.24	8	\$2.40	\$4.00	\$6.40	902252020
By 101 / Rice Lake Rd/Pit Site	8.44	9	\$2.70	\$4.00	\$6.70	702111018
Rocky Brook Rd Pit Site	8.67	9	\$2.70	\$4.00	\$6.70	702111018
SR19 Wetland Mitigation Site	0.40	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	821183016
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.16	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100803
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.17	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100804

South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.16	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100805
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.17	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100806
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.17	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100808
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.16	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100809
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.16	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100810
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.08	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100811
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.08	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100812
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.50	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100817
South Point Ferry Site (Platted)	0.38	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	950100818
South Point Ferry Site (NonPlatted)	0.12	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	721162020
South Point Ferry Site (NonPlatted)	0.14	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	721162026
South Point Ferry Site (NonPlatted)	0.27	1	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$4.30	721162034
				Assessment:	\$84.30	

Total WSDOT

Assessment:

\$888.87

WSDOT Definition of Right-of-Ways, parcels, and holdings. Can be used to help classify land types for assessments.

WSDOT Property Types Subject to County Noxious Weed Assessments			
Parcel Type	Description	Calculation Method	Notes
Highway Right of Way	Unnumbered parcels for highway alignment	\$/Centerline Mile	Rates will be determined and set in each county at rates equitable to surrounding assessment rates, WSDOT Regional Maintenance Offices will have to participate locally as assessment rates are determined and set
Rail Right of Way	Mainline and Sidetrack of WSDOT owned rail	\$/Centerline Mile	Rates will be determined and set in each county at rates equivalent to the Highway Right of Way
Right of Way Adjacent	Numbered parcels adjacent to right of way, SRAs and Weigh Stations should be included for all highways, includes Highway Beautification Areas	\$/Centerline Mile	Rest Areas Weigh Stations Beautification Areas / Landscape Areas Excess Land/Remnant outside RW (acquired due to threat of Eminent Domain)
Office Buildings/ Maintenance Facilities	Numbered parcels in a variety of settings	\$/Acre or Square Foot	
Project Construction/ Unconstructed Right of Way/Surplus Property	Numbered parcels purchased for future highway construction	\$/Acre or Square Foot	Some counties remove the parcel numbers prior to construction After construction - communication between WSDOT and county needs to take place to unnumber these parcels/stop billing as individual parcels in order to capture as part of the centerline miles
Ferries Terminals	Captured as Facilities or Highway R/W?	\$/Acre or Square Foot	Technically these are highway rights of way and may already be captured in the centerline mile criteria

←
Where possible, counties should merge these with adjacent right of way parcels and remove numbers
←

Airfields	Numbered parcels owned by WSDOT Aviation	\$/Acre or Square Foot	
Park and Rides	Many are not adjacent to the highway	\$/Acre or Square Foot	
Wetland Mitigation	Most are not adjacent to the highway	\$/Acre or Square Foot	Wetlands directly adjacent to right of way may be captured in the unnumbered highway parcels
Pits & Stockpiles	Numbered parcels in a variety of settings	\$/Acre or Square Foot	Pits directly adjacent to the right of way could be combined with unnumbered highway parcels
Radio Sites	Numbered parcels in remote areas	\$/Acre or Square Foot	Many do not abut the highway facilities
Temp Construction Areas	?	No Payment	WSDOT needs to confirm these are not billed to WSDOT as an exchange of property
Easement Area	Invoice Fee Owner -	\$/Centerline Mile	Concern if on other agency property. May be double billed (other agency and WSDOT both if part of active highway)
Turnbacks/Street Relinquishment	Invoice Local Jurisdiction	\$/Centerline Mile	These are properties in which WSDOT and the local jurisdiction agreed that the property would be transferred back to the local jurisdiction

Appendix C

Meeting Dates and Attendees

The WSNWCB scheduled and facilitated three meetings in 2021 and two in 2022 held via WebEx, dates and attendees as follows:

July 7th, 2021

Attendees:

Jeff Chapman, Jefferson County Assessor representing the Association of County Assessors
Darryl Pheasant, Grant County Treasurer representing the Association of County Treasurers
Travis Snell, WSDOT Government Relations Liaison
Ray Willard, WSDOT Roadside Asset Manager
Randy Johnson, WSDOT Property Management
Anne Schuster, WSNWCB Education Specialist
Mary Fee, WSNWCB Executive Secretary
Todd Davis, Kittitas County Noxious Weed Control Board Coordinator, non-participating attendee

August 11th, 2021

Attendees:

Jeff Chapman, Jefferson County Assessor
Mike Hougardy, Kittitas County Assessor
Darryl Pheasant, Grant County Treasurer
Ilene Thomson, Yakima County Treasurer
Travis Snell, WSDOT Government Relations Liaison
Ray Willard, WSDOT Roadside Asset Manager
Randy Johnson, WSDOT Property Management
Jennifer Johnson, WSDOT Property Management
Anne Schuster, WSNWCB Education Specialist
Mary Fee, WSNWCB Executive Secretary
Todd Davis, Kittitas County Noxious Weed Control Board Coordinator, non-participating attendee

September 22nd, 2021

Attendees:

Jeff Chapman, Jefferson County Assessor
Mike Hougardy, Kittitas County Assessor
Darryl Pheasant, Grant County Treasurer
Ilene Thomson, Yakima County Treasurer
Travis Snell, WSDOT Government Relations Liaison
Ray Willard, WSDOT Roadside Asset Manager
Randy Johnson, WSDOT Property Management
Jennifer Johnson, WSDOT Property Management
Anne Schuster, WSNWCB Education Specialist
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December 30th, 2022

Mary Fee, WSNWCB Executive Secretary

July 21st, 2022

Attendees:

Jeff Chapman, Jefferson County Assessor
Darryl Pheasant, Grant County Treasurer
Ilene Thomson, Yakima County Treasurer
Ray Willard, WSDOT Roadside Asset Manager
Jennifer Johnson, WSDOT Property Management
Anne Schuster, WSNWCB Education Specialist
Mary Fee, WSNWCB Executive Secretary

November 16th, 2022

Attendees:

Jeff Chapman, Jefferson County Assessor
Mike Hougardy, Kittitas County Assessor
Darryl Pheasant, Grant County Treasurer
Ilene Thomson, Yakima County Treasurer
Ray Willard, WSDOT Roadside Asset Manager
Robin Curl, WSDOT Property Management
Mary Fee, WSNWCB Executive Secretary