

**Government Accountability Project
People for Puget Sound
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals
Washington Employment Lawyers Association
Washington Federation of State Employees
Washington Public Interest Research Group
Washington State Labor Council**

February 6, 2007

Dear Member of the Legislature:

Our organizations either directly represent the concerns of Washington state public employees or work with state and local government employees. On behalf of the dedicated public employees of Washington State, we strongly urge you to vote for Senate Bill 5406.

Senate Bill 5406 provides technical adjustments to the state's whistleblower statute and closes several critical loopholes in the current law.

The principal problem that the bill addresses is the law's limited coverage. Currently the statute only covers or protects disclosures made by state employees to the State Auditor. This bill will protect an employee who is retaliated against for disclosures made in--

- Testimony before the Legislature;
- A report to law enforcement authorities; or
- A complaint to a state ethics commission or licensing board.

A second problem the bill addresses is the limited definition of "improper government action". The bill expands the definition and will allow employees to report incidents of--

- Poor performance or mismanagement; or
- Abuse of authority.

Further the bill will protect--

- Communication of scientific opinion;

And prohibits--

- Manipulation of technical reports without scientific justification.

Finally, SB 5406 would clearly state that public servants cannot be punished for failing to follow a clearly illegal order.

**Washington employees deserve these protections.
Please, vote yes on Senate Bill 5406.**