

Washington Property Tax Updates: State legislature faces an impasse, with days to a government shutdown

Legal Alert
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The state legislature's second special session ended on June 21; Washington lawmakers remain deadlocked on the state's next biennial budget, so Governor Inslee called legislators back for a third special session. They must produce a 2017-19 state operating budget while satisfying the state Supreme Court's mandate in its 2012 McCleary decision to adequately fund public education. The Court gave the legislature until September 1, 2018, to fund public schools at a constitutional level, but the Court also requires a detailed plan for how to do so before the legislature can adjourn this year.

If the legislature cannot produce a budget by June 30, parts of the state government will shut down starting July 1. Gov. Inslee made clear in a June 21 press conference that while he is reluctantly preparing for that possibility, lawmakers ought to "get it done by June 30" and he does not see a reason to extend that deadline; they have "been punting for too many months." The budget talks are occurring behind closed doors; their outcome may surprise us all.

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