**What’s the latest news in Olympia about the LEOFF 1 pension system? Are we going to be “merged” or not?**

There is as yet no definitive answer to that often asked question. The LEOFF 1 Coalition has followed the legislative proceedings this session with patience and with our Lobbyist, Joyce Willms checking several times a day on legislative bills that may affect our pension system. There have been rumors the State Senate might include language in the operating budget to take funds from the Leoff1 Surplus retirement plan or a merger but no bill has been introduced. We have heard that legislators may wait until the closing days to introduce such a bill but until one is introduced there is little else we can do. We have spoken with a law firm about this case but until a bill is actually introduced there is little that we can do but wait.

Leoff1 Coalition President Andy Wilson, Secretary Dave Peery, and Lobbyist Joyce Willms have met with 95% of the house of representatives and 20% of the senate about our position. We made it very clear that we’re not interested in any type of merger. We have heard encouraging comments from several legislators but until a bill is actually drafted they urge us to be vigilant and to stay in touch.

Washington State Legislatures know who Leoff1 Coalition is and what our issues are. We’re here to protect the law and the Leoff1 retirement fund (No mergers). Good sentence.

Legislators listened politely but most have been cautious in their words of support maintaining that until they see an actual bill they cannot commit to either support or oppose a bill.

We are all aware of the funding problems faced by our legislators in trying to meet the state’s fiscal needs. We are aware that Education funding k-12 issue still remains an immense hurdle that must be resolved before a realistic budget can be crafted and that will have a chance of meeting legal requirements.

The House Republicans submitted their draft of the budget to the Senate Republicans that did not include using Leoff1 Retirement trust fund money.

Having spent time speaking with legislators and having our lobbyist keep daily tabs on legislative proposals as well as speaking and meeting with other retirement groups and LEOFF 1 agencies. The LEOFF I Coalition Lobbyist is monitoring the Senate and House budgets and watching for any new bills on finance; finance bills can be introduced at any time. During our deliberations with legislators we indicated a willingness to speak with legislative representatives or committees about any actual “surplus” LEOFF 1 funds that actuaries could prove existed with intent to address legislative proposals as long as no merger or closure of LEOFF Plan 1 was required.

We recognize the temptation that the term “surplus State funds” elicits in legislators who are hard-pressed to meet state funding requirements. Recognizing that, we understand that until that underlying legislative need is satisfied there will be no peace for LEOFF 1 members/beneficiaries.

If legislators are determined to assume possession of any LEOFF 1 pension assets by way of a merger proposal we are determined to consult with available legal representation and related LEOFF 1 groups to prepare for what may come.

Washington State does not have a revenue problem it has a spending problem.

The LEOFF 1 Coalition

Do you like this wording at all to replace the last paragraph?:

When the Legislature introduces a bill or tries to raid the LEOFF I fund, The LEOFF I Coalition will be working with our attorney, Phil Talmage and will file a class action lawsuit.