

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, April 12, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Numerous news outlets report that just after midnight yesterday morning, lawmakers in the state House of Representatives passed a controversial bill that allows police to pursue suspects on a limited basis. Senate Bill 5352 would lower the “probable cause” standard for police pursuits to “reasonable suspicion” in limited cases involving people suspected of committing a violent crime, a sex offense, domestic violence-related offenses, driving under the influence, and trying to escape arrest. The bill would also only require officers to notify a supervisor after engaging in a chase, instead of getting supervisory permission to begin a pursuit, as the law currently states. That provision applied to jurisdictions with fewer than 10 officers but was amended in the House to include jurisdictions of fewer than 15 officers. This amended version also provides that the emergency vehicle operator training required for pursuing officers must include training on risk assessment analysis of whether a person being pursued poses a serious risk of harm to others. The bill received bi-partisan support, passing 57 to 40, but Democrats voting against the bill argued it goes too far, while Republicans voting the same way said the measure doesn't go far enough. It will now head to the Washington Senate for final approval.

Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz signed today a partnership agreement with Nova Scotia-based Sustainable Blue – a zero-discharge, land-based salmon farming company – to identify opportunities for siting sustainable finfish aquaculture in Washington State. In a press release from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Commissioner Franz said, “This agreement represents an important step toward restoring finfish aquaculture in a sustainable, healthy way that does not pit farmed fish against the native salmon we all work so hard to sustain.” The agreement would launch an exploration of land-based sites managed by the DNR that would be suitable for closed-containment aquaculture on state-owned lands. Sustainable Blue is the longest-running commercial zero-discharge Recirculating Aquaculture System in North America. The Sustainable Blue system recirculates 100% of its salt water, creates zero discharge to local waterways and communities, and eliminates any potential for escapes.

Around 10:30am this past Easter Sunday, deputies responded to the 1700 block of Higgins Road Southeast in Port Orchard for reports of a shooting. Several television news outlets report that when the deputies arrived, they found Chadwick Rose dead with an apparent gunshot wound. A woman identified herself as the victim's girlfriend with blood on her hands. The woman, who remains unidentified to the press, told police that Chet Weese of Port Orchard had shot her boyfriend when Rose visited Weese's house. When the suspect was confronted about it, he said, “I did,” according to the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office. Weese was arrested at the scene. During a court appearance on Monday, Weese was charged with second-degree murder and unlawful possession of a firearm. He pleaded not guilty to both charges. Bail has been set at \$1 million.

This past Monday, the Jefferson County commissioners officially repealed the emergency declaration for COVID-19, in place since March 2020, but kept several policies – now optional – from before. The virtual broadcast of public meetings may continue, but the in-person limit for those meetings will return to maximum capacity. Not all meetings are required to be held both virtually and in person, but the recommendation is for county boards and committees to offer hybrid-format meetings.

Beginning last Friday, April 7, travelers will experience around-the-clock, one-way alternating traffic controlled by a signal on US 101 about 5 miles north of Quilcene at Leland Creek. The Washington State Department of Transportation will shift traffic onto a bypass around the construction zone that will allow crews to begin removing outdated barriers that block fish from continuing upstream at three locations on US 101. Crews will build a bridge on the highway just north of Rice Lake Road and install two larger box culverts at the north and south unnamed tributaries. The new bridge at Leland Creek will improve fish migration by opening 14 miles of upstream habitat. The new box culverts at the north and south tributaries will produce nearly 4 miles of upstream habitat. Construction is expected to be complete in early 2024.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.