

SB 2146

Senator Joan Heckaman

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Senator Joan Heckaman from D-23 and I am here to provide testimony in support of SB 2146. This bill is a result of an Interim study in the Government Administration Committee. The committee heard about the survey completed addressing accessibility issues in the Capitol.

Some accessibility issues were addressed prior to the session with funds available through OMB and Facilities Management. Included in those updates included many restroom accommodations that have been beneficial given the COVID Pandemic.

This bill would provide \$460,950 for accessibility upgrades such as handicapped accessible doors to committee rooms. An additional amount of \$289,050 is for additional costs to improve other accessibility needs. There is also an emergency clause so work can begin as soon as this bill passes both chambers and is signed by the Governor. I would believe you will hear a complete list this morning from other individuals.

One suggestion I would make is that the Capitol Ground Planning Commission invite someone with disabilities to join the Commission. That additional individual would be able to provide invaluable information on access, accommodations and upgrades needed. Having said that, I think that one thing missing in this discussion is accommodations needed by hearing impaired individuals as well as visually impaired persons.

I would ask the committee to give this bill a favorable recommendation and move it to the House so these projects can begin, and the Legislative Assembly spaces get up to code.

For your information there is also an Interim bill that mirrors this bill and I would leave it up to the Prime Sponsor to work with the committees on how to proceed.

Thank you.