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2009 Fuse Sizzle Awards An accounting of who is hot (and who is not) for real progress in Washington State

(Seattle, WA) Representative Sharon Nelson takes home the Fuse 2009 Intercontinental Smackdown Champion Award for out-organizing her opponents and taking down both the predatory lending industry and the oil industry in the same legislative session.

On the other side of the achievement spectrum, holding tight to her Junkyard Dog Award is Senator Janea Holmquist, who earned her award by being a loyal attack dog for the building industry and far right. Throughout the 2009 session of the Washington State Legislature Holmquist mounted aggressive personal and at times dishonest attacks against good government reforms, citizen activists, gay rights, womens right to choose and whatever else her handlers gave her scripted talking points for.

"We believe that leadership and accountability are two of the most important keys to a strong democracy," said Fuse Executive Director Aaron Ostrom. "Our awards are about leadership for progress. They identify who's great, and who's second rate."

The annual Fuse Sizzle Awards program was developed in 2008 to recognize great leadership and promote accountability. They are based on extensive conversations with activists, lobbyists, and progressive leaders; a great deal of research, and our own experience.

This year Fuse is handing out eight Sizzles for courageous leadership. Sadly, an equal number of Fizzles are being awarded to state officials – all of whom stood in the way of progress during the 2009 session.

The 2009 Fuse Sizzle Award winners are:

- **"Intercontinental Smackdown Champion" to Representative Sharon Nelson**, for out-organizing her opponents and taking down both the predatory lending industry and the oil industry in the same legislative session. She passed payday lending reforms (HB 1709) into law and helped the House pass a fee on oil companies to clean up water pollution (HB 1614 died in the Senate).
- **"True Patriot" to Representative Eric Pettigrew** for, courageous and principled

leadership based on the progressive values that make our country great. He led an uphill fight to identify new revenue options that could offset draconian budget cuts until the bitter end. His leadership reflects a commitment to community responsibility, compassion, equal opportunity and common sense virtue - all important values that are both progressive and patriotic.

- **"Mother Jones" to the leaders of the Blue Green Alliance, including Representatives Tami Green, Dave Upthegrove, Sharon Nelson and Timm Ormsby.** Their coalition of conservation and labor legislators is a significant challenge to the relatively conservative, business-oriented ways of the House Democratic caucus. Mother Jones was a famous turn of the century labor and community organizer; she was denounced on the floor of the US Senate as the "grandmother of all agitators."
- **"Strong Man" to Representative John McCoy,** for defending a citizens clean energy initiative - I-937 -- from major rollbacks pushed by energy utilities and approved by the Senate. Resisting intense pressure from the Senate, he held the bill in Committee until all parties committed to a reasonable compromise.
- **"Profiles in Courage" to Representative Maureen Walsh and Senator Dale Brandland,** for doing the right thing in the face of guaranteed grief. Rep. Walsh and Sen. Brandland are Republicans who voted for a bill expanding domestic partnership rights for same sex couples and their families. Rep Walsh co-sponsored the bill. Her principled courage earned her an official censure from her local party, the Franklin County Republicans.
- **"Spotlight on the Shadows" to Josh Feit and David Goldstein,** for journalism that matters. Josh Feit provides the state's sharpest political reporting on his new Publicola.com political blog. David Goldstein and his friends at HorsesAss.com provide the snarkiest progressive muckraking and political analysis in Washington. Feit and Goldstein keep legislators honest and provide the information and analysis we all need to recognize great leadership and hold legislators accountable.
- **"Committee Chair of the Year" to Senator Jeanne Kohl-Wells,** for making her Senate Labor and Commerce Committee a force for progress in Washington. Most of the good things the Senate did this year came out of her committee, including: predatory lending reforms, long overdue updates that strengthened and simplified the Consumer Protection Act, and good government reforms to prevent trade associations from diverting workers compensation funds into political campaigns.
- **"Favorite Gunslinger" to Representative Brendan Williams,** for challenging the House Democratic caucus's submission to the Building Industry Association of Washington on consumer protection and campaign finance issues, for consistently speaking truth to power, and for sticking to his guns on progressive issues.

The 2009 Fuse Fizzle Awards go to:

- **"Junkyard Dog Award" to Senator Janèa Holmquist** for being a loyal attack dog for the building industry and the far right. Throughout the session Holmquist mounted aggressive personal and at times dishonest attacks against good government reforms,

citizen activists, gay rights, womens right to choose and whatever else her handlers gave her scripted talking points for.

- **"Katrina Award" to both houses of the Legislature and the Governor** for a failed response to a severe crisis. While other legislatures around the country found new ways to fund essential services, our states' leaders responded to the biggest economic crisis in generations by eliminating health coverage for 40,000 low-income people, cutting 9,000 higher education slots and cutting an estimated 8,000 government jobs.

- **"Broken Compass Award to Senators Steve Hobbs and Jeanne Berkey** for consistently betraying the needs and interests of their constituents, for consistently siding with powerful businesses in opposing progress, and for consistently failing to represent the values of voters in their districts. They rely on the business community to guide their votes. Some examples: they voted to weaken bills aimed at reducing global warming pollution and to roll back a voter approved clean energy initiative. They opposed efforts to improve training and pay for child care providers. Berkey voted against predatory lending reforms. Hobbs voted against improving local funding options for transit, and two years ago he led the fight against the Children's Safe Products Act, a bill to ban toxic toys.

- **"Profiles in Lack of Courage Award" to Representative Troy Kelley**, for consistently being afraid to stand up for the interests of his district when it requires him to stand up to the business lobby. This past session he voted to roll back a voter approved clean energy initiative, against limiting development in floodplains, against fees on oil companies to clean up water pollution, against stronger protections for resource lands and against charging shippers and oil tankers to prevent oil spills with an emergency response tug at Neah Bay.

- **"Jekyll and Hyde Award" to Senator Chris Marr**, for his transformation from a conservation hero in the 2008 Legislative Session to an anti-environmental crusader in 2009. After earning awards from Fuse and Washington Conservation Voters in 2008 for his leadership on growth management, Marr turned Hyde and led the Senate's efforts to roll back I-937. He also successfully blocked the passage of HB 1180, which would have removed BPA -- a toxic hormone-disrupting chemical that is harmful to children and adults -- from baby bottles and sippy cups. And he opposed the Governor's global warming legislation, while successfully lobbying her to veto a local option tax to fund transit. He showed glimpses of Jekyll in 2009 with a good performance on workers compensation reforms and in the budget and revenue discussion. We need more Jekyll and much less Hyde in 2010.

- **"Wrong Way Award" to the chairs of the House and Senate Transportation Committees, Representative Judy Clibborn and Senator Mary Margaret Haugen**, for leading the state backwards with a 1950s style approach to transportation that neglects transportation choices and cities. Rep. Clibborn attempted to eliminate funding for and divert funding away from voter-approved efforts to put light rail on the I-90 bridge. Senator Haugen successfully lobbied the Governor to kill new local option funding for transit agencies. Their backroom process for spending the \$341 million of federal stimulus spending on transportation that came to our state did not allocate a single dime to investments in transit and transportation choices or in the city of Seattle,

while spending liberally on freeway expansions. Both cut funding for one of the State's most cost-effective transportation investments - a program that provides incentives for employees of small businesses in urban areas to use carpools and transit.

- **"Pushmi-pullyu Award" to Governor Christine Gregoire**, for a conflicted and often backwards performance on important issues. She continues to be a leader on global warming, but was a real disappointment on many other issues during the 2009 Legislative Session. Her opposition to any discussion of new taxes set the stage for the Legislature's draconian all cuts budget. She played a major role in the ridiculous decision to call the State Patrol on the State Labor Council for their Worker Privacy Act lobbying. And then she wrapped up a terrible legislative session with three surprise partial vetoes that undermined this year's meager progressive victories: she axed hard-fought early learning education reforms, new local option transit funding and an advisory committee designed to monitor and support health care reforms. Looking forward, we're hoping to see more of her progressive leader side and less of her cautious technocrat side.

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Fuse is a 100,000 person progressive network that uses online communications and grassroots organizing to give people a stronger voice in government.

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