

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 18, 2019

Issue 6

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WEEK 6

If you are looking for the weekly schedule for the committees it can be found on the legislative website. The schedules are usually out by Monday morning; keep in mind that they do change, so it is a good idea to look before you head to the statehouse. The committees are open to the public and if you are interested in testifying on a bill or subject you may call the committee assistant listed at the bottom of the schedule to request time before the committee.

The legislature will be off the week of March 4th for Town Meeting break. This is a good opportunity to reach out to your Senator and or Representative and let them know how you are feeling about a certain issue or bill.

Included this week

Wetlands

Act 250

Clean Water Funding /S-96

H-107 Paid Family Leave

S-23 Minimum Wage

Bills Introduced

Events of Interest

Wetlands

The House and Senate Agricultural Committees continue to take testimony on their wetland bills. The Senate Agricultural committee will hear from Secretary Moore of ANR and Secretary Tebbets of Agriculture on Wednesday morning at 9:00 and at 10:00 they will hear from Mike O'Grady, Legislative council, farmers and clean water advocates. The complexity of the wetland issue is compounded by the difference between Federal and State definitions, oversight and regulations.

Act 250/H-197

The House Natural Resources Committee continues their work on the Act 250 bill. The committee is discussing where members need more information before recommending changes to the bill. The committee has been spending a significant amount of time on understanding forest fragmentation, high elevation impact, and critical resource areas. The committee realizes the importance and the challenges of these issues and they are

trying to get as much information as possible. The committee has scheduled a mark-up (changes) on parts of the bill for Friday.

The committee also did a walk through of **H-197**, another bill dealing with Act 250. **H-197** proposes to promote the goals in the State's Capability and Development Plan while reducing the amount of time and money spent on obtaining Act 250, and other State permits. **H-197** has a few similarities to the House Natural Resources Act 250 bill but focuses more on the Enhanced Designation. "Enhances Designation will provide a new incentive for cities and towns to raise the bar on local environmental regulations by modifying Act 250 jurisdiction with qualified state designated areas." **H-197** is supported by the Administration.

CLEAN WATER FUNDING/S-96

The Governor's long-term water quality funding proposal received preliminary support from the Environmental Protection Agency last week. The proposal includes:

- \$8 million from estate tax
- \$2 million from bottle redemption
- \$4 million from property transfer tax

This, for some legislators still is about \$6 million short.

At the same time, the Senate Natural Resources committee was discussing **S-96**, An act relating to establishing a Clean Water Assessment to fund State water quality programs. **S-96**, when introduced included a per parcel fee to fund water quality. While discussing **S-96** the committee moved away from the per parcel fee and gravitated towards exploring the Governor's recommendations. Senate Natural will be discussing a new version of **S-96** on Thursday and Friday.

H-107 PAID FAMILY LEAVE

H-107 passed out of House General on a vote of 8-1-1, the bill will now go to House Ways and Means. The program will be funded by a NEW .93% payroll tax split evenly between the employer and employee. Both employers and employees will be required to pay .465% of wages. Employees can apply for up to 12 weeks of leave with up to 100% wage replacement with a cap at double the state's livable wage of \$13.34/hour - or \$26.68. Employees that make more than \$26.68 will not receive 100% wage replacement. There is NO size threshold for a business, if you have one employee, you will be required to pay into the program. An employee may take leave to care for a "family member," to tend to their own "serious illness," or take up to two weeks of bereavement leave. There is also no exemption for agriculture in this bill. The Ways and Means committee will be reviewing **H-107** next week. Ways and Means will be working with the Joint Fiscal office to get a better idea of the actual costs of the program.

S-23 MINIMUM WAGE

Senate Economic Development passed **S-23**, raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2024, the bill will now go to Senate Appropriations. As I indicated before there is no exemption for agriculture in this version of the bill.

S-11 An act relating to limiting senatorial districts to a maximum of three members

This bill passed the Senate and is now in House Government Operations. The bill would restrict the number of Senators representing any Senate district to three. The bill has received no negative comments or concerns.

Below is the link to the Vermont Legislative website
Legislature.vermont.gov

BILLS OF INTEREST

PR-1 Elections; Governor; four-year term of office

H-10 An act relating to the establishment of year-round U.S. Eastern Daylight Saving Time

H-33/H-74 An act relating to the use of disposable carryout bags

H-36 An act relating to notifying property owners of a recorded lien

H-64 An act relating to financing water quality programs

H-76 An act relating to studying the creation of sales tax zones

H-79 An act relating to eligibility for farm-to-school grant assistance

H-81 An act relating to the definition and sale of milk

H-82 An act relating to the taxation of timber harvesting equipment

H-86 An act relating to revenues designated for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund

H-84 H-92 H-93 H-94 H-95 H-96 All dealing with Telecommunications and Broadband

H-147 An act relating to presuit mediation of disputes related to access to landlocked property

H-171 An act relating to water quality funding

H-190 An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife

H-205/H-268 An act relating to the regulation of neonicotinoid pesticides

H-210 An act relating to studying the elimination of Vermont's sales and use tax

H-213 An act relating to exemption from Act 250 jurisdiction

H-220 An act relating to employee misclassification

H-226 An act relating to creating an exemption from the land use change tax

H-231 An act relating to the estate tax exclusion

H-232 An act relating to protection from nuisance lawsuits for agricultural activities

H-234 An act relating to releasing land from Act 250 jurisdiction

H-252 An act relating to use value appraisals

H-254 An act relating to adequate shelter for livestock

H-261/H-267 An act relating to public notice of land application of biosolids and septage

H-265 An act relating to establishing a hemp seed distribution program

H-272 An act relating to the eligibility of aggregated parcels of forestland for use value appraisal

H-273 An act relating to funding water quality programs with revenue from the estate tax and the property transfer tax

S-23 An act relating to increasing the minimum wage

S-52 An act relating to creating an education property tax that is adjusted by income for all taxpayers

S-55 An act relating to the regulation of toxic substances and hazardous materials

S-58 An act relating to the State hemp program

S-64 An act relating to presuit mediation of disputes related to access to landlocked property

S-85 An act relating to the valuation of landlocked parcels

**20th Annual
VERMONT DAIRY PRODUCERS
CONFERENCE
Tuesday, February 26, 2019
8:00 am to 4:00 pm
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
Register at vermontdairyproducers.com**

DAIRY RECEPTION

**CELEBRATE
The 2 + 2 Program at VTC and UVM
Wednesday, March 27, 2019
4:00 TO 6:00
CEDAR CREEK ROOM
STATEHOUSE**

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***ejc Consulting***

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Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, staying together is  
success”

- Henry Ford