

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 4, 2019

Issue 4

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WEEK 4

Included this week

Wetlands

Miscellaneous Tax Bill

H-81 Definition of Milk

H-82 Taxation of timber harvesting equipment

H-149 Land lock parcels

S-23 Minimum wage

S-58 State hemp program

Act 250

H-107 Paid Family Leave

S-11 Limit of Senators

Bills Introduced

Events of Interest

Wetlands

The House and Senate Agricultural Committees and the House Committee on Natural Resources heard from Laura Lapierre, Wetlands Program Manager for ANR. Laura provided the committees with an overview of the Wetland program and the importance of wetlands to the ecosystem of the state. Each committee had a different concern and a different set of questions for Laura, however they all wanted to make sure there was clarity and consistency in the wetlands program. The House Agriculture indicated they are working on a wetlands bill that will be introduced next week.

Miscellaneous Tax Bill

The House Ways and Means committee has started working on their miscellaneous tax bill. The bill includes changes to 8 different areas of taxes. In some cases it is a simple clarification in others it is a repeal or a major overhaul. There are five changes or clarifications to the Current Use & Land Change Tax that have been suggested by the Tax Department, they include:

- **Expand filing exemption to include ex-spouse in a divorce settlement agreement**
- **Remove “exceeds 999 years” from the definition of “owner”**

- **Notification requirement when changes are made to enrolled land**
- **Land Use Change Tax Calculation**
- **Land Use Change Tax Lien to include “notice of contingent lien”**
- **Repeals land use change tax lien subordination and fee on July 1, 2020**

The Tax Department testified the change in calculation creates the most taxpayer friendly mechanism for dealing with partial land use change tax issues. The change to the lien was requested by the lending community and follows the New Hampshire language of recording application in land records as a “notice of contingent lien”. I will keep you updated as this bill moves through the process.

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

This bill proposes to clarify the definition of “milk” to mean the pure lacteal secretion of hooved animals. A product sold as milk that does not conform to the definition of “milk” would be an adulterated product subject to penalty by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

The House Agriculture and Forestry committee will be taking testimony on this bill Tuesday.

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

This bill proposes to exempt from the sales and use tax parts for or accessories sold with timber harvesting equipment.

The House Agriculture and Forestry committee will be taking testimony on this bill Tuesday.

H-149 An act relating to the valuation of landlocked parcels *This bill proposes to clarify that the lack of road access should be considered in the valuation of landlocked parcels.*

This bill was introduced last week and was discussed briefly in House Ways and Means.

S-23 An act relating to increasing the minimum wage

This bill proposes to increase the minimum wage so that it reaches \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2024.

This bill is being discussed in Senate Economic Development. I do not see an exemption for agriculture in this version but I will check.

S-58 An act relating to the State hemp program

This bill proposes to amend the requirements of the State hemp program to conform to federal requirements for the cultivation of hemp.

The Senate Agriculture committee will be taking testimony on this bill Tuesday and Friday.

Act 250

The House Natural Resources committee did a walk through of the Act 250 bill on Tuesday and Wednesday of last week. The committee highlighted several areas in the bill that are changes. The committee is hearing from members of the different Agencies and Departments this week on the changes. The Act 250 bill is a committee bill and can be found on the House Natural Resources committee web-page under (witness) Ellen Czajkowski; Ellen is the legislative council for the committee.

H-107 An act relating to paid family leave

This bill proposes to create a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program within the Departments of Labor and Taxes that will be funded by contributions from employers and employees. The bill also proposes to amend Vermont's existing Parental and Family Leave Act to make it applicable to additional employers and to clarify certain provisions.

H-107 is in House Committee on Housing, General and Military Affairs. The committee has taken some testimony and will continue to take testimony this week. The Committee is planning on voting the bill out by February 12th. **H-107** creates a 0.93% payroll tax to be shared by the employer and the employee. The fund created by this payroll tax would provide up to 12 weeks yearly for 100% of an employees salary. A business employing 10 or more at 30 hours per week would be required to enroll in this program. I did not see an agricultural exemption but will check.

From the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce

The Senate Committee on Government Operations plans to vote out **S-11** on Tuesday a bill that would restrict all senate districts to a maximum of 3 senators. The committee expected to hear from more concerned parties, especially from Chittenden County, however, did not. LCRCC understands that a potential reapportionment and redistricting of Senate districts may lead to better representation for Vermont constituents and will be closely monitoring this proposal as it moves through the required processes.

If you have input on the potential changes to the way your senate districts are apportioned, the time is running out to speak about them with your Senators.

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
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

**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**

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- Henry Ford
