



## Legislative Update January 18, 2021

Happy MLK Day! Last week at the State Capitol was slightly more energetic than the first week. Caucus priorities were rolled out, floor debates were held on procedural rules and over 85 committee met; with the vast majority being member introductions and state agency overviews.

However, there were some fireworks earlier in the week when Gov. Walz and legislative leaders attended an annual pre-session discussion hosted by Forum News. Usually, this gathering is mostly respectful. But amid national and local discussions of election integrity and the storming of the Capitol in DC, emotions did boil over a bit. If you choose to watch the full 90-minute video ([\(22\) Forum Legislative Panel - YouTube](#)), help yourself!

If you don't want to watch the political tussle, just know that the Senate Republican Majority has stated their top priority this session is balancing the \$50 billion biennial state budget. To address the projected \$1.3 billion deficit, Senate Finance Committee Chair Julie Rosen has suggested a 5% across-the-board cut in each department budget.

The House DFL Majority has a different view on 2021 legislative priorities. Their top 5 bills introduced earlier this week focus on helping people negatively impacted by COVID. For a list of those priorities and to watch the House DFL media availability ([DFL leaders outline top early priorities for 2021 session - Session Daily - Minnesota House of Representatives \(state.mn.us\)](#)).

Happening this past week for MAT, Steve Fenske did an excellent job giving an overview on townships before the House Local Government Division. Thanks to Leslie Rosedahl for her production of the MAT materials that Steve presented before the committee. To see the hearing and Steve's presentation, go to [Minnesota House of Representatives \(state.mn.us\)](#).

Other highlights of MAT activities include:

- An example of our educating and relationship building with legislators showed during the House Transportation Committee last week when Rep. Torkelson and Chair Hornstein both spoke about adequately funding town roads.
- The Workers' Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC) met on various workers' comp proposals. Nothing of specific consequence to MAT was raised. Just in case, here's a link to the agenda ([Agenda: Workers' Compensation Advisory Council, Jan. 13, 2021 \(mn.gov\)](#)).
- MAT continues to participate in a couple of coalitions/stakeholder groups on issues of interest to MAT

- The Open Meeting Law (OML) stakeholder group is comprised of representatives from the media, data privacy groups, cities, counties, state agencies and MAT. The media/data privacy groups want government meetings to be more open and elements of the meetings open for public comment. MAT and other entities are watering this down so that it won't have any impact on township meetings.
- The infrastructure development fees stakeholder group is comprised of representatives from the building industry, the state lawyers' association, local governments, etc. Local entities – including MAT - want the ability to assess road improvement fees on private business development. Conversations continue from last session to determine an acceptable compromise.

Looking forward to the week ahead, with FBI reports of more potential violence on inauguration day - both in DC and in other State Capitols - there is a chance that legislative actions around the MN Capitol will be subdued next week, in the name of safety. That being said, there will still be plenty of zoom committee hearings held and more agency overviews.

Specifically for MAT this week, we continue to schedule meetings and connect with key legislators, staff and other lobbyists on MAT priorities. For example:

- F&B lobbyists are in the process of connecting with Rep. Torkelson about transportation legislation.
- With the assistance of MAT Board Members Reno Wells and Jane Youngkrantz, F&B lobbyists are reconnecting with coalitions on volunteer drivers' legislation and the decommissioning of wind turbines/solar panels.
- F&B lobbyists are also starting to reach out to key legislators on chief authoring MAT legislation that deal with annexation, transportation funding, and mandated culvert replacements to name a few.

MAT will also be monitoring the upcoming House committee hearing on broadband funding this Wednesday. For more information, see the following:

**Wednesday, January 20, 2021 , 8:30 AM**

**[Industrial Education and Economic Development Finance and Policy](#)**

**Chair:** Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr.

**Location:** Remote Hearing

**Agenda:**

This remote hearing is taking place pursuant to Rule 10.01, which you may view here: <https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/rules/permrule/1001.htm>  
HF 14 (Ecklund) Broadband grant program money deposit transferred.

This remote hearing may be viewed via the House webcast schedule page: <https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/schedule.asp>

NOTE: HTV 1 and HTV 2 will provide live closed captioning. Video archives of meetings streamed on HTV 3, 4, and 5 will have closed captions added. Other reasonable accessibility

accommodations may be made with advance notice.

If you have questions about the accessibility of remote hearings or require an accommodation, please contact Jenny Nash at: [jenny.nash@house.mn](mailto:jenny.nash@house.mn) or by leaving a message at 651-296-4122.

### Bills of Interest

Below are MAT bills of interest that F&B lobbyists are tracking for you. If you have specific questions about the bills below or if there is legislation that is not on this list that you have questions about, please let Steve Fenske or me know.

1. HF1/SF (Noor) – Economic assistance provided for housing, MFIP, food and \$70 million Broadband grant funding.
2. HF 9 (Greenman) - Elections; voter registration and absentee voting provisions modified, early voting system established, restriction on number of voters an individual may assist eliminated, Help America Vote Act fund governing standards modified, small donor state match program established, and money appropriated.
3. HF14/SF22 (Ecklund/Bakk) - \$120 million Broadband grant program money.
4. SF66HF23 (Cwodzinski/Davnie) - Requiring the secretary of state to amend rules to recognize a medical bill as a proof of residence on election day.
5. HF35 (Elkins) - Establishing a Website Accessibility Grant Advisory Council; appropriating money for grants to cities and counties to improve website accessibility.
6. HF45/SF54 (Ecklund/Bakk) - Appropriating money for all-terrain vehicle trails in Kabetogama Township.
7. HF52 (Nash) - Requiring public comments at all open meetings of public bodies, including those conducted by electronic means.
8. SF5 (Newman) - A bill for an act relating to elections; requiring photo identification to register to vote and to vote; creating a voter identification card; establishing provisional ballots; requiring reports; appropriating money.