

Fredrikson and Byron Legislative Update



MAT/MATIT STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 24, 2020

Thus far, 269 bills have been introduced in the House and 350 in the Senate. But few have received a hearing. That will slowly begin to change this week. The bills' topics are quite diverse but have some common themes: COVID, Executive Powers, Police Reform, Elections, Education, Health Care, Seniors, Racial Equity.

This coming week, Governor Walz will release his budget and it will almost certainly be a higher number than what GOP legislators want to see. The Governor needs to find spending for the projected surplus for the current biennium and address the deficit in the next biennium. So the key points to watch will be if he raises revenue, how he does so and where he chooses to spend.

In addition to state resources there are also significant federal dollars coming to the state from the recent Federal COVID Relief Funds. While the majority of these funds are dedicated to specific areas, the Governor will have the ability to direct them in a more targeted manner.

The Senate GOP laid out their top goals for the session; many of these are topics we have heard before from the caucus, such as keeping the costs of government down and reopening schools and businesses.

<https://www.mnsenaterepublicans.com/mnpriorities2021/>

Specifically for MAT, here are some highlights from last week and looking ahead:

- Steve Fenske gave MAT “Township 101” Testimony before the Senate Local Govt. Division. He’ll be testifying on township transportation needs in the House Transportation Committee on Jan. 28 and township property tax issues in the House Property Tax Division on Jan. 27. If you’re interested in watching the hearings, please let me know and I can get you the proper links.
- During a Data Practices Act (DPA) overview in the Senate Civil Law Committee, several Senators were curious why rural townships are exempt from some DPA mandates. F&B lobbyists have followed up with these Senators to educate them and explain the reasons for and importance of exempting towns from the Data Practices.
- OML Stakeholders Update – Depending on a stakeholders’ group meeting last week with Rep. Nash on his Open Meeting Law and public comment requirement bill. MAT continues to have concerns about the breadth of changes proposed to public comment in board meetings. We’re in the process of coordinating with the lead local government organizations.
- Local Govt. Street Assessment Group – SF277 has been introduced by Sen. Pratt and yet to be introduced in the House. We stand by ready to assist the lead local government organizations of this coalition.

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- Culvert Replacement Cost Shift – F&B lobbyists have reached out to watershed district associations and we're awaiting a response.
- Annexation Legislation – Sen. Bruce Anderson will chief author the bill in the Senate. Sen. Karla Bigham has already expressed her interest in being a co-author.
- Decommissioning Wind Turbines/Solar Panels – F&B lobbyists have reached out to the counties and MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). We're in the process of meeting soon to discuss MAT's position and determine if legislation is necessary.
- Transportation Funding – Steve Fenske and I are meeting with Rep. Torkelson tomorrow (Monday, Jan. 25) to discuss funding options for townships. We will be meeting with key transportation legislators as well.
- Volunteer Driver Coalition – F&B lobbyists reconnected with Sherry Munyon (Volunteer Driver Coalition – MN Public Transit Assoc.) to help with the informal coalition. There will be two bills coming out soon.
 - Definition of a Voluntary Driver - Rep. Koegel/Sen. Howe will be the chief authors and there will possibly be no opposition from the Insurance Federation and trial attorneys.
 - Income Tax Subtraction – This bill will subtract the costs in state income tax above the standard federal charitable tax deduction of \$.14/mile. Rep. Lislegard and Sen. Chamberlain are likely to be the chief authors.

Bill Watch

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. If there's no indication of interest on these bills, they will be removed from this list as I expect a master watch list of bills to grow to close to 100.

1. 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.
 - MAT and F&B lobbyists are reaching out to Rep. Greenman to amend this bill when it is heard Thursday, Jan. 28 in the House State Government Finance bill. The goal is to include some exceptions for townships around website mandates.
2. HF14/SF22 (Ecklund/Bakk) - \$120 million Broadband grant program money.
 - HF 14 was heard in the House Industrial Education and Economic Development Committee and laid over for possible inclusion in a larger omnibus finance bill later in the session.
3. HF45/SF54 (Ecklund/Bakk) - Appropriating money for all-terrain vehicle trails in Kabetogama Township.

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4. HF52/SF180 (Nash/Benson) - Requiring public comments at all open meetings of public bodies, including those conducted by electronic means.

- As mentioned above, MAT is actively working on this bill.

5. SF142 (Goggin) - Modifying certain rules for operating all-terrain vehicles on public roads (including town roads) under the 30 mph speed limit.

- MAT and the F&B lobbyists are reaching out to meet with Sen. Goggin on this bill.

6. SF157 (Bigham) - Town roads speed limits process development.

- MAT and the F&B lobbyists are reaching out to meet with Sen. Bigham on this bill.

7. SF173 (Newman) - Elections; requiring photo ID to register to vote and to vote; creating a voter identification card; establishing provisional ballots.

8. SF179 (Kiffmeyer) - Elections, requiring voters who register on election day to cast provisional ballots; making conforming changes.

9. HF158 (Xiong, J.) - Requiring voting instructions in certain languages other than English for use in in-person absentee voting.

10. HF180 (Sundin) - Authorizing levy authority for certain soil and water conservation districts in Carlton & Pine Counties.

11. HF210 (Daudt) - Authorizing counties, cities, and townships to accept certain documents or signatures electronically, by mail, or by facsimile.

12. HF228 (Acomb) - Modifying requirements of the statewide invasive species management plan.

13. HF234 (Lucero) - Exempting sewage septic tank trucks from certain vehicle weight limitations.

- This will be a perennial bill that we have to keep our eyes on and defeat.

14. SF277 (Pratt) - Municipal street impact fee imposition authorization.

- This is the coalition bill that we will be active on.

15. SF326 (Carlson) - Mail balloting in any town or any city with fewer than 400 registered voters' authorization.