



WEEKLY SESSION UPDATE

April 10, 2015

STATUS OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Legislature came back from break this week. Committees are now beginning to work on their budget bills, taking up legislation for possible inclusion. The deadline for all committees to act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills is Friday, April 24th.

With only a little over five weeks left until the Constitutional deadline for adjournment (May 18), the pace at the Capitol is speeding up quickly.

BUDGET TARGETS

The Senate has released a side-by-side document of the budget targets. This document provides a good comparison of the budget proposals from the House, Senate, and Governor. A copy of that document is attached.

STATE OF THE STATE

Last night, Governor Dayton delivered his annual State of the State Address. He used this opportunity to call on Minnesota lawmakers to support major spending programs now that the long recession is over.

Governor Dayton's speech highlighted a number of proposals pushing for free, statewide pre-k programs for 4-year-olds, a 10-year transportation fix fueled by a gas tax increase, and an almost \$1 billion public works bill.

The governor aimed a significant part of his speech at Republican critics, who he said refuse to acknowledge how well Minnesota's doing. The governor was critical of Republicans for wanting to cut taxes instead of spending more for state programs. Republicans are proposing \$2 billion dollars in tax relief.

Dayton's speech was his fifth State of the State as governor and the first in this second term, which he says will be his last four years in office.

TRUTH-IN-TAXATION DATE CHANGE

On Thursday, the House Property Tax and Local Government Finance Division took up HF1459 (Drazkowski). This bill would require that truth-in-taxation statements be sent out between October 10 and October 17 of each year, rather than the time frame of November 10 to November 24 in current law. Additionally, it would change deadlines of various actions in the property tax system necessary to accomplish the October mailing schedule.

The MLC submitted a letter in opposition to this legislation. A copy of that letter is attached. During the hearing, a number of groups, including the MLC, the League, Metro Cities, and others, voiced significant concerns with the bill.

Ultimately, the bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the House omnibus property tax division report.

REVERSE REFERENDUM FOR PROPERTY TAX LEVIES

On Wednesday, the House Property Tax and Local Government Finance Division heard HF 1671 (Drazkowski). This bill would allow voters to reverse referendum property tax levies when the levy proposed is higher than the previous year's levy, is signed by at least 10% of the voters, and receives a majority vote. With these circumstances in place, the highest a city or county could levy would be the previous two years non-debt levy plus the current proposed debt levy.

Metro Cities, the League and other local government groups oppose this legislation and the League provided public testimony. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the House omnibus property tax division report.