

# Legislative Newsletter

Jan. 26, 2018



## First Bill Goes to Reynolds; Senate Releases Deapprops Bill

After years of talk and stalemates, a water quality bill has finally been sent to Gov. Reynolds's desk. Senate File 512 was passed by the House, 54-46, on Monday afternoon. Though voting happened mostly on party lines, four Democrats voted with their Republican colleagues, and four Republicans broke ranks to cross the aisle. SF 512 is estimated to generate more than \$280 million over the next 12 years for various water quality projects by establishing a funding stream converting the metered water sales tax into an excise tax. Democrats were critical of the bill, saying it didn't go far enough or address the real issue. The Governor appears that she intends to sign the bill.

On the other side of the rotunda, the Senate Republicans released their de-appropriations bill Thursday. Senate Study Bill 3089 calls for \$52 million in budget cuts. The hardest hit departments will be Department of Human Services (\$9.9 million), regent universities (\$19 million), community colleges (\$5.4 million), and the courts (\$4.8 million). The State Courts Administrator said if the bill passes, courts in 30 county courthouses will be forced to close. A Senate Appropriations Committee was held just hours after the bill was released, and it was passed out of committee, 13-8. Some good news to note: the backfill was not touched in the de-appropriations bill. The governor has included the backfill in her budget, as well. While the

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House has made no indication as what they will do, the Senate introduced a bill this week that would roll back the backfill over three years, so there may have an idea of what could eventually come to pass.

A bill which would alter how lease-purchase agreements on building projects may be conducted was introduced in the Legislature this week. House Study Bill 568 requires that construction projects and improvements that are built by a private contractor under a lease or a lease-purchase contract with either the state, local governments, community colleges, or Regents to be subject to competitive bidding in the same manner that a public project is subject to competitive bidding.

In light of predictions that the backfill will be phased out in the next few years, this is an example of the legislature providing a one-year reprieve with the backfill and taking away the authority of providing local governments with tool to maintain equipment and construction projects. A subcommittee on the bill is scheduled for Monday.

At this morning's meeting, the UCC agreed to register in opposition to the bill.

Finally, a bill regarding fee assessments on copy requests was passed out of the House Local Government Committee this week, 16-5. House File 2013 (successor bill House File 2117) would require an agency in possession of certain documents to furnish them at no cost when they are requested by the state public defender, a public defender officer, or an attorney or nonprofit legal organization. Documents included are: police reports, photographs, grand jury transcripts, audio and videotapes and their transcripts, and DHS reports. If the document is provided on a storage system - for example, a flash drive - the agency is required to provide the software necessary to access the storage system. An amendment addressing the costs is expected before the House takes it up.

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