

# Legislative Newsletter

Feb. 12, 2021



This week was the deadline for individually sponsored bills for this legislative session. Committee bills and department bills may be introduced at any time. The first funnel deadline is scheduled for March 5 this year.

**Senate File 352** (formerly Senate File 112) passed the Senate Natural Resources Committee 8-3 in the past week. This is the forest and fruit tree exemption. This bill has garnered some concerns for local governments. The bill makes the value of forest/fruit tree property tax credit 75 percent of the actual value and requires property to be 10 acres as of 2022 and makes the exemption for five years. Current qualifying properties that are less than 10 acres also have the five-year exemption, ending next year. Property owners are required to enter into a depredation agreement with the Dept. of Natural Resources, with inspections by that department.

**House Study Bill 186** was introduced this week. This bill makes EMS an essential county purpose. It allows cities and counties to impose an additional levy for EMS; the trustees of such a district may impose an additional levy for EMS which is above the statutory rate if the current rate is insufficient. Levies must be approved by election.

**House File 417** (formerly House Study Bill 54) is the 411 bill. HF 417 did pass out of committee during week 5.

To the Governor's desk: **House File 232**: This bill is in the collection of "Back the Blue" bills, meaning it contains provisions found in that main bill. This one pertains to disorderly conduct. After unanimous passage in both chambers (88-0 and 48-0), it has been sent to Gov. Reynolds' desk. This particular piece of legislation requires that a person intentionally or recklessly cause unreasonable distress when making a loud noise that is disorderly conduct that causes distress to the neighbors.

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In House action this week, The House Human Resources Committee unanimously passed **House Study Bill 141**: This bill would restrict the State Auditor's Office's access to personally-identifiable information on a disease report, and would not allow state and local agency employees to have access to personally-identifiable information on a disease report from the Department of Public Health or board of health unless the employee has completed HIPPA training.

The House Local Government Committee unanimously approved the following bills: **House File 93** (autopsy costs); **House Study Bill 96** (county land record changes); **House Study Bill 97** (county land record fees).

The House State Government Committee unanimously voted to pass **House Study Bill 56**, which pertains to flood protections. This bill discusses the purchase and construction of land and structures to protect property from flooding as an essential county purpose (which is not subject to voter approval in order to incur indebtedness).

Across the rotunda in the Senate:

The Senate Natural Resources Committee approved in a 10-1 vote **Senate Study Bill 1180** (drainage district hearings and reports; now Senate File 353).

The Senate Transportation Committee approved the following bills: **Senate File 46** (Electronic device uses and prohibitions; now Senate File 330. This bill is a companion to House File 392.

The Senate Ways & Means Committee voted to approve **Senate Study Bill 1085** (multi-residential properties; this bill is a companion to House File 418); **Senate Study Bill 1146** (collecting court debt; amended); and **Senate Study Bill 1122** (tax matters).

The Senate Local Government Committee unanimously approved the Governor's housing proposal bill (**Senate Study Bill 1142, now Senate File 295**). The bill creates a housing tax credit program (income, insurance premium, franchise/money and credits) and requires the Iowa Financial Authority (IFA) to develop a process and approve credits for ownership in qualifying housing investments. The credit can be claimed at any point over a ten-year period, and it can be carried forward for ten years but not refunded.

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The bill also strikes the cap of \$3 million from the real estate transfer tax to the Housing Trust. Additionally, in the bill, this proposal increases the allocation for workforce housing credits to \$50 million and the reservation for small cities to \$20 million, with the credits repealing in July 2024.

In terms of disaster funding, the bill permits IFA to transfer unused money from specified funds for disaster relief housing, upon permission from the Governor. The bill establishes a program to help people whose primary homes are damaged in a disaster; as part of the program, the IFA may work with local program administrators in cities on disaster housing and eviction relief after an emergency has been declared, and includes forgivable loans and grants, as well as reporting requirements, eviction prevention programs and other provisions.

Finally, the bill has provisions related to brownfields; it allows the EDA to allocate \$20 million for credits to redevelop brownfields and extends the brownfield credit program to 2031.

## **Introduced Bills/Successor Bills:**

**House File 395:** This bill makes changes to agricultural property taxes based on adjustments to drainage and levee district taxes.

**House File 410:** This bill allows a claim for worker's compensation to be maintained from one year when the employee receives the denial of liability if that period is later than the current two-year period. Does not allow any worker's comp benefits to offset to payments from IPERS.

**Senate Study Bill 1167:** This bill allows county supervisors to amend the County Land Record Information System as needed for the on-going implementation of the system.

**Senate Study Bill 1169:** This bill essentially makes flood protection an essential county purpose (not subject to voter approval in order to incur indebtedness).

**House File 444:** This bill allows a township to use existing levy/bond powers to build a firehouse for EMS and fire services. Voters may petition for an election. Limits the amount of a levy.

Senate Study Bill 1102 is now **Senate File 343** – Department of Corrections and probation information and records.

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Senate File 46 is now **Senate File 330** – Electronic device uses and prohibitions. This bill is a companion to House File 392.

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