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Subject: Conf. Exec Priv: Daily Legislative Report for Friday, March 25

House will reconvene Tuesday, March 29 at 10:00am

Senate will reconvene Tuesday, March 29 at 9:30am

HOUSE:

House Committee Bills Introduced:

H. 878 An act relating to capital construction and State bonding budget adjustment.

H. 879 An act relating to the Health Care Fund contribution assessment and the taxation of e-cigarettes.

Senate Bill Referred:

S. 52 An act relating to creating a Spousal Support and Maintenance Task Force;

H. 878 An act relating to capital construction and State bonding budget adjustment
Referred to Committee on Appropriations

Favorable Report; Third Reading Ordered:

H. 863 An act relating to making miscellaneous amendments to Vermont's retirement laws

Third Reading; Bills Passed:

H. 206 An act relating to regulating notaries public;

H. 519 An act relating to approval of the adoption and codification of the charter of

H. 859 An act relating to special education;

Quick Legislative Intel:

Senate Appropriations passed out S.243. Goes to the Floor next week.

House Appropriations passed out Transportation Bill, H.877.

Committee On-Goings:

Senate Health & Welfare – H.812 ACO Oversight

A LOT of consensus on this bill in the House and with ACOs and advocates. Not many questions from committee. Richter testified re: Universal primary care-- asking for further study, including implementation plan and impact on premiums.

Senate Health & Welfare – H.761 PCP Quality Measures

H.761 requires GMCB to look at PCP quality measures, but SIM is already doing this. Committee will consider what to do next.

Yesterday:

Senate Appropriations – Siting

The committee was not sure that the “billback” provision to pay for the \$300K in regional and municipal energy planning was the best approach. Sens. Starr and Campbell, at least, want to investigate a fee on developers. Sen Ashe discussed the Finance amendments and wasn’t averse to further work on a funding mechanism.

Sen. Kitchel distributed a fiscal note. They are also asking the RPCs to revise their cost estimate to include the more expansive list of items to be funded per Senate Finance’s amendment (i.e. municipal planning work). Sen. Starr wants to better understand the volume of applications anticipated in the coming year in terms of a potential fee; there was discussion of capitalizing the first year of the planning work and then funding it with an applicant fee.

Sen. Starr would like to add language clarifying that in the Section 248 process, the “public good” should relate to the public good of Vermont, not the region (and that if someone were looking out for VT’s public good, we’d be entering long-term contracts for cheap Canadian hydropower that isn’t ruining our ridgelines).

Sen. Starr would also like the sound docket language to be strengthened to – for instance – allow for third-party sound monitoring. Sen. Kitchel was also keyed into the sound measurement discussion and hoped the Board would ultimately address periodic vs. continuous sound monitoring.

The committee also got into the regional/municipal plan certification criteria, particularly in terms of regional “quotas.” The Public Assistance Officer and pending Finance amendment for a pilot public counsel were discussed. The committee will vote on the bill tomorrow, after they have a new RPC budget and have done some brainstorming on other funding ideas.

Senate – H. 854 - An act relating to timber trespass

Rep. Forguite: Bill amends timber trespass laws and clarifies actions that constitute criminal enforcement. House Judiciary Committee adjustments to H. 854: Section 3604: Reinstates exemption language for VTrans, railroads, and utilities conducting vegetation management & Section 3606: Removes attorney's fees and clear and convincing evidence language

Rep. Chesnut-Tangerman: House Committee on Natural Resources only had a brief amount of time to discuss new amendments

Michael Snyder: Critical to criminalize timber trespass activities

Michael O'Grady: The Defender General's Office and advocates oppose severe criminal enforcement for these actions and are attempting to provide consistency for crimes in Vermont

OTHER:

Climate Caucus – Transportation Climate Initiative

Chris Cole, Secretary, Agency of Transportation presented. TCI includes a core group of states pushing for a regional carbon policy. There are 5 states willing to advance regional climate action. New York, Vermont, Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island. Two supporting states which are: Maryland and Massachusetts. DOTs continue to receive pressure to provide adequate infrastructure while aiming to advance climate action. Vermont is too small to enact a carbon tax or cap and trade policy on its own. TCI is looking to WCI for ideas, but wants to develop a policy independent of RGGI. TCI members are exploring available options and will likely advance actions related to a cap and trade system. TCI hopes to reach an agreement or set of next steps in the next few months.