



VPA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE #3

January 20, 2009

A belated Most Excellent Inaugural Day!

This Week at the State House

The work of the legislature really gets underway this week under a full committee schedule, with breaks only for the presidential inaugural this afternoon, and a joint assembly session on Thursday to hear the **Governor's budget address** (2:00 pm). Committees at this point are getting up to speed on the most pressing issues at hand, taking background testimony from state agencies, organizations, task forces, and summer study committees. As expected, the money committees are focusing on the FY09 budget adjustment act, FY10 budget issues, and state and federal stimulus packages. Two related public hearings are scheduled for Wednesday, in Room 11:

1:15 - 3:15 pm Administration's FY09 Budget Adjustments
5:00 pm Proposed Amtrak Cuts

This week H. Agriculture will be hearing from the "Branding and Marketing Task Force" regarding food and agricultural based tourism (Wed), while H. Commerce will be taking testimony from the Commission on the Future of Economic Development (Wed), as well VHCB's Gus Seeling, on housing and economic development and IBM (Wed) and a DPS "Green Growth Smart Grid" presentation (Thur). H. Energy & Natural Resources is focusing on energy issues most of the week, with some discussion of solid waste thrown in. H. Transportation is looking at transportation budgets, public transit and proposed cuts to Amtrak. Bond ratings and the "Transportation Infrastructure Proposal" (TIP) are getting air time in H. Ways & Means, along with Agency of Commerce and Community development fees, for consideration under the annual fee bill (Wed).

On the Senate side, S. Government Operations is getting an overview of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development from Commissioner Betsy Bishop (Thur); S. Institutions is focusing on an economic stimulus package all week, and S. Natural Resources & Energy is looking at "shovel ready projects" and proposed cuts within the Agency of Natural Resources.

Bills

Bills "released for introduction" (but not necessarily introduced): House – 68, Senate–28

Of note:

- H.28 Temporary wastewater system permits (for holding tanks)
- H.45 Use of clean energy fund to support geothermal energy
- H.48 Designating snowboarding as the Vermont state sport
- H.57 Act 250, rule amendments apply only to applications filed after amendment
- H.59 Outdoor boilers #2; exempt from emission limits if 1,000+ ft from neighboring properties
- S.17** Act 250, municipalities w/zoning, subdivision may opt, by ordinance, to exempt from Act 250 construction of improvements on tracts of land entirely within a "traditional industrial district" in existence since June 1, 1970.
- S.18 Clothesline bill (it's back...), limits municipal power to prohibit renewable energy devices
- S.28** Regulating landscape architects (licensing) -- **VPA has been asked to support**

Federal Stimulus Package: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Thanks to Joss Besse for forwarding the Committee on Appropriations Summary (dated 1/15/2009) to the VPA list. The proposed funding package is much more comprehensive in its scope than originally anticipated. Since everyone received it, I'll only highlight summary figures ~ more detailed breakouts are available on the list Joss sent around.

-- proposed \$275 billion in economic recovery tax cuts and \$550 billion in "targeted priority investments" with "unprecedented accountability measures"...

Energy

- \$32 billion for transmission, distribution, production system improvements with focus on renewable technology
- \$16 billion for public housing energy efficiency retrofits
- \$6 billion for modest income home weatherization

Technology

- \$6 billion to expand broadband internet service in rural and other under served areas

Transportation, Transit, Environment

- \$30 billion for highway and bridge construction
- \$31 billion in energy cost savings investments to modernize federal and public infrastructure
- \$19 billion for clean water, flood control and environmental restoration (inc. water, wastewater)
- \$10 billion for transit and rail to reduce traffic congestion and gas consumption

Education

- \$41 billion to local school districts through various programs
- \$79 billion in state fiscal relief to prevent cutbacks to key services

VPA This Week

Smart Growth Summer Study Committee: Dean Pierce, VPA's rep on the committee, reported to the VPA list this week that the committee has completed its work last Wednesday, and that a final, edited version of the report should be available this week.

Contact: dpierce@shelburne.vt.org

Riparian Bill: A subcommittee of the Legislative Committee met today to review proposed changes to the riparian buffer bill being introduced this session by Rep. David Deen, including potential changes to Chapter 117 (under Section 4424, or a new 4428).

Contact: SGustin@ci.Burlington.vt.us

For more information contact Dean or Scott, or come to our

VPA Legislative Workshop this Friday, 1:00-3:00 pm, VLCT offices, Montpelier

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