

VPA Legislative Update: Cinco de Mayo Edition

Calendars: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/>

Streaming (floor): <http://digital.vpr.net/online-streams>

Just two more days to go! Proposed bill amendments from the chamber and floor have been subject to final vetting in standing committees, while devilish details are getting worked out (or not) in conference committee. Along with other bills in the pipeline, municipal charters are getting a lot of floor time this week. All is proceeding on schedule, in anticipation of final budget votes this weekend. With the demise yesterday of any form of marijuana legislation in the House, we'll all have to act straight for at least another year, which could make it especially hard to follow this year's presidential campaign. Margaritas all around... Here's the skinny on what remains to be seen in the Governor's inbox (other than budget stuff):

H.C.R. 416 Honoring Polly Nichol for her exemplary leadership in regional, State, and municipal housing and community development is on today's House Consent Calendar – congratulations Polly!

The Siting Bill (S.230) as amended in the Senate was rejected by the House yesterday which, as expected, called for a conference committee. As reported, it seems the only real sticking point is whether required sound standards for wind turbines (to be developed) will retroactively apply to existing installations. Rep. Klein has questioned whether this is constitutional (or not). But there may be other differences also up for negotiation—including the \$300,000 for planning added back in by the Senate...

The House “seven calendar day” amendment to the **Open Meeting Law (S.114)**, was stripped out in conference committee, as agreed to yesterday in the House. They couldn't even spare us the weekend—so five calendar days it is for posting meeting minutes on websites, where they shall remain (except in draft form) for no less than one year from the meeting date.

Forestry Bill/Ch. 117 (H.857) as amended in the Senate, passed the House this morning, with Chapter 117 planning language (including statutory definitions of concern) and “Study Committee on Land Use Regulation and Forest Integrity” provisions (to look at regulatory options under Ch.117 and Act 250) intact – though the definitions are to be reviewed by the study committee before they go into effect, on January 1, 2018 (along with plan element language). “Forestry operations” as defined (to include processing of wood harvested on site) is also added to the list of activities that are exempt from local regulation, effective July 1st.

The hunting, fishing, trapping Bill (H. 570), as amended to include endangered and threatened species critical habitat language, passed the House on Monday, as amended in the Senate, and is on its way to the Governor. The ivory bill (H.297), as amended in the Senate, did not fare so well in the House, meeting an untimely demise in conference committee.

The DEC permitting bill (S.123), as amended in the House, is on today's Senate Calendar, as is the **Capital Budget Bill (H.878)**.

Bills in Conference Committee:

H.868 Economic Development Bill (workforce housing, Ch. 117 admin amendments)

H.872 Fee Bill

H.873 Tax Bill

H.875 Budget Bill

H.876 Transportation Bill

H.877 Transportation Funding Bill

Bills that have passed the House and Senate (to Governor for signature):

H.249 Intermunicipal Services (former COG bill)

H.367 Planning Bill (8-year municipal plans)

H.517 Classification State Waters

H.518 Clean Water Fund Board Membership

H.570 Hunting, Fishing, Trapping (Endangers Spp. Habitat)

H.580 Conservation Easements

H.608 Solid Waste Management

H.610 Clean Water RLF, Grant Programs

H.674 Public Notice, WWTF Discharges

H.829 Water quality on small farms

H.854 Timber Trespass

H.857 Timber Harvest (Ch. 117 forest integrity planning, forestry operations exemption)

H.864 Ag Exemption, Sales and Use Tax

S.176 Disclosure ADA compliance, residential construction

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