

SDFB Legislative Update – Week 1

The first week of the 2020 Legislative session started with the State of the State address by Governor Kristi Noem. The theme of her address was “South Dakota is Open for Business”. The Governor talked about the favorable climate for business including the tax structure, work ethic, state credit rating, balanced state budget and lack of red tape.

The state will be looking to take a lead in bioprocessing of ag production by exploring a partnership between SDSU and the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. Specifically, the Chemical Engineering Department at the Mines and the Biotech school at SDSU would collaborate to support research and development of bioprocessing of ag production, searching for new and better uses for ag production and taking biotech from the test tube to a commercially doable scale. The effort in 2020 will begin by looking into a feasibility study. If feasible, partnerships with the private sector would be developed.

Noem also mentioned the continued effort to expand rural broadband in the state. In 2019, \$5 million of state monies were matched with an additional \$20 million in grants and other monies to expand the broadband network in the state. Those efforts will continue in 2020.

The Governor also highlighted the recent progress in trade agreements with China, Canada and Mexico and the importance of those markets to South Dakota and to agriculture.

Lastly, it was stated that state revenues the past two months have improved with November being a positive \$8.2 million over budget, and December a positive \$2.7 million. The additional dollars will be targeted to K-12 education, providers and to state employees. Two additional months will be available before the 2021 budget needs to be finalized and hopes are for continued improvements.

On Wednesday this week, the State of the Judiciary was given by Chief Justice David Gilbertson. This was his last and 19th address, as he will retire within the year. One item mentioned was the success of the program to provide lawyers in rural South Dakota. Twenty-nine rural counties with populations of less than 3,500 are currently participating in the program.

Thursday, Crow Creek Tribal Chairman Lester Thompson, gave the State of the Tribes address.

Committees are holding orientation and informational sessions and hearing reports from departments and agencies. There are 115 bills in the LRC system after the first three days with hundreds more expected in the next two weeks.

SD Farm Bureau Day at the Capitol will be held February 10-11 in Pierre, so please make plans to participate.

Be sure to view the SDFB Bill Tracking list, which can be found at this link:

<https://www.sdfbf.org/Policy-Advocacy/State-Legislative>

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns during session.

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Helpful Links:

View the SDFB bill-tracker list here:

<https://www.sdfbf.org/Policy-Advocacy/State-Legislative>

View the details on any bill by clicking this link and typing in the bill number:

http://sdlegislature.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Default.aspx?Session=2020

Find contact information for the Legislators here:

<http://sdlegislature.gov/Legislators/ContactLegislator.aspx?Session=2020>