

SDFB Legislative Update – Week 9

The main business of the 2020 legislative session concluded Thursday evening this week. Legislators will return to Pierre on March 30 to consider vetoes from the Governor. The Governor has already sent two veto messages to the House of Representatives.

Following is a recap of the priority bills and outcomes that South Dakota Farm Bureau followed this session.

ZONING BILL

SB 157 passed the House floor on Monday with an amendment to remove the requirement that conditional use decisions be approved with a majority of the members *present*. With the amendment, the bill now requires that decisions be made by a majority of the members of the approving authority. The Senate concurred with the House amendment and SB 157 was delivered to the Governor for her signature.

Thank you for all your outreach to legislators on this important issue. The bill, while not perfect, will provide certainty and tools for producers and counties and goes a long way to ensure South Dakota is “open for business”, especially the business that livestock operations bring to our rural communities. Your voice truly mattered in getting this bill passed!

BUDGET

HB 1294, the general appropriations bill for fiscal year 2021, passed both houses late yesterday evening. This bill, and its companion **SB 38**, which makes changes to current year appropriations, included several significant pieces including:

- A 2 percent raise for teachers, Medicaid providers, and state employees (nearly \$55 million);
- An increase to cover additional healthcare costs to the state employee health insurance pool (\$13 million);
- More than \$4 million in state dollars that will be multiplied four or five times with federal dollars for county roads and bridges;
- \$400,000 to expand 211 service to all 66 of South Dakota’s counties; and
- \$3.5 million to implement an industrial hemp program.

EDUCATION LEVIES ON PROPERTY

The two bills setting the tax levies for K-12 education were both passed by both houses Thursday night as well.

HB 1042, a bill to set the levy to fund special education, raises the levy to \$1.684 per thousand of valuation, an increase from last year of 7.4 cents per thousand. This is a 4.6 percent increase.

HB 1043, sets the general school levies for each class of property. It calls for a 3.9 percent reduction in the levies from last year. Ag land, owner-occupied, and commercial property are treated with an equal percentage decrease based on the statewide total of property valuations. As the total value of property statewide increases, the levy decreases. The numbers are:

- Ag land: \$1.443 proposed, down from \$1.473
- Owner-Occupied: \$3.168 proposed, down from \$3.296
- Commercial: \$6.556 proposed, down from \$6.821.

BIOPROCESSING

HB 1100, a bill to appropriate funds to study bioprocessing in an effort to find new uses for ag products from corn to timber, was amended on Monday on the Senate floor to set the funding level at \$1 million. It passed the Senate 33-0 and the House concurred in the Senate amendment. HB 1100 was delivered to the Governor on Wednesday.

WATERSHED DISTRICTS

HB 1166 was amended in Senate Local Government last week. As amended, it passed the Senate and the House concurred in those amendments. HB 1166 was delivered to the Governor on Wednesday. The emergency clause would implement the bill upon the Governor's signature and efforts can begin immediately to reorganize a dormant district.

RURAL BROADBAND

One of Governor Noem's priorities is expanding access to broadband in underserved areas. \$5 million was allocated in last year's budget. This was matched by federal funds to connect 5,000 underserved households and businesses here in South Dakota.

HB 1189 appropriates an additional \$5 million for broadband services for the coming year. This bill passed the Senate 34-0 on Monday and was delivered to the Governor on Wednesday.

VETERINARY EDUCATION

HB 1227, a bill to provide \$550,000 of "bridge" funding for the 2+2 Veterinary Education collaboration between the University of Minnesota and SDSU, also passed the Senate 34-0 on Monday and was delivered to the Governor on Wednesday.

WRITTEN DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAM

SB 70, a bill to have South Dakota join 47 other states in providing the written portion of the driver's license exam in Spanish, was amended and passed the House on Monday. The Senate concurred in the House amendments on Tuesday and the bill now heads to the Governor for her signature.

In addition to watching for any more vetoes from the Governor, we will also be closely watching the announcement of summer study committees.

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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>