

Legislative

Update

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Only Two Weeks to Go

Indiana Legislature wrapping up session

This past week marked the Second and Third Reading deadline to act on bills in the second chamber. The Senate wrapped up activity on House bills, and the House completed work on Senate bills. With two weeks left in the 2008 regular session, property tax reform is still the predominant issue facing the General Assembly. It remains to be seen what resolution can be attained in the final 14 days. To prove the seriousness of the issue and the commitment that legislators have, the conference committee process began February 29th with a committee meeting on HB 1001, which contains the property tax language.

Of the approximately 770 pieces of legislation that were introduced at the beginning of the session, about 270 survived the first half and passed over to the other chamber. At this point, approximately 160 bills are alive. That might not seem like a lot, and it really isn't, but you have to remember that anything that passed one chamber of the legislature is considered to be "alive" and is eligible for consideration during the conference committee process. We will be watching bills very closely to make sure that there are no surprises that could have an adverse impact on the municipal electrics.

Electric Utility Specific

As you know, the issue of enacting an electric Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in Indiana was one we have been monitoring throughout the session. While bills were introduced and discussed in the House, nothing came out. In the Senate, however, there was a little more activity. Senate Bill 224 was approved by the Senate and sent over to the House, where it never received a committee hearing. House Bill 1117, which came out of the House as a coal gasification tax credit bill, was amended in the Senate to include the RPS language contained in SB 224. That measure is now eligible for conference committee. Again, we will be keeping a close eye on that and all others.

One issue that has cropped up in the last couple of weeks has to do with tree trimming by utilities in Indiana. While the issue was discussed in very general terms, no bill was ever given a full hearing. However, the end result of discussions has been for the legislature to direct the Regulatory Flexibility Study Committee to take a look at the tree trimming/line clearing practices of Indiana's electric utilities. If this develops into an official charge for Reg Flex this summer, please know that I will be seeking your input as to the practices of your local utility with regard to tree trimming.

Thank you

We had a very impressive turnout of the municipal electric crowd for the 2008 Legislative Reception on February 13th. Thank you to all who attended!!

Additionally, the APPA Legislative Rally was this past Monday through Wednesday, February 25th through 27th, and we had a very good trip to Washington, D.C. Our Public Power message was delivered by a strong Indiana delegation, and again, thank you to all who participated!!

Public Power Goes to Washington



The Indiana Public Power delegation hit the streets of Washington, D.C. February 25th through 27th, visiting the offices of Congressman Burton, Congressman Buyer, Congressman Visclosky, Congressman Hill, Congressman Pence, Congressman Souder, Congressman Ellsworth, Congressman Donnelly and Senator Lugar.

Pictured above are several members of the Indiana contingent with Indiana Senator Evan Bayh. From left to right: David Albaugh, Vice President of Town Council - Flora; Mel Davis, Utility Director - Lawrenceburg; Jim Schrader, General Manager of Utilities - Mishawaka; Raj Rao, President - IMPA; Senator Evan Bayh; Mayor Tom Jones - Linton; Mayor Jim Fleck - Columbia City; Steve Miller, Electric Utility Superintendent - Frankfort; and Brent Slover, General Manager of Utilities - Linton.

The IMPA Legislative Update is published by the Indiana Municipal Power Agency. For questions regarding legislative activities, please contact Carolyn Wright, Vice President of Government and Member Services for IMPA, at (317) 575-3873 or cwright@impa.com.