



STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 17, 2020

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2020 Indiana General Assembly Week 2

- ▲ The second week of the 2020 “short” legislative session has drawn to a close. The session is moving quickly. With roughly 7 ½ weeks remaining, it will only get more fast-paced.
- ▲ Legislators in both the House and Senate are limited as to how many pieces of legislation they can introduce during a short session. In the House, the limit is 5 bills per legislator and in the Senate, the limit is 10 bills.
- ▲ There are a little over 900 bills that have been introduced for consideration during the 2020 session.
- ▲ There are now just 1 ½ weeks left for committee hearings to be held, and all bills must clear the first chamber or be dead for the session in 2 ½ weeks.
- ▲ IMPA’s annual State Legislative Reception & Dinner was a success with over 100 attendees! A big thank you to our IMPA members who participated and engaged with state legislators from all over the state!
- ▲ Governor Holcomb delivered his 4th State of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly on Tuesday evening, January 14th. He used his address to talk about several key policy areas. Key points that the Governor focused on during his address included: initiatives to increase teacher pay in 2021, banning hand-held devices while driving, raising the smoking/vaping age to 21, adoption initiatives through the IN Department of Child Services, and infant mortality.
- ▲ Reminder of key dates for the remainder of the first half of the 2020 legislative session:
 - January 20th – State Holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – no session
 - January 28th – House committee deadline
 - January 30th – Senate committee deadline

- January 30th – 2nd Reading deadline for House bills
- February 3rd – 3rd Reading deadline for House bills
- February 1st – 2nd Reading deadline for Senate bills
- February 4th – 3rd Reading deadline for Senate bills

- ▲ The General Assembly will get back to business for the second half of the session on Monday February 10th.

Key Issues This Week

- ▲ Education – several priority bills are already moving through the process in expedited fashion including holding teachers and schools harmless from results of the ILEARN test;
- ▲ Health care – a bill to address out of network billing for health care services, aka surprise billing (House Bill 1004), was heard in the House Insurance Committee, with an amendment and passage expected next week;
- ▲ Several initiatives tied to workforce are moving, including one that focuses on careers in the utility industry, which passed out of the Senate Education Committee this week (Senate Bill 195);
- ▲ Smoking/vaping age – House Bill 1006, which raises the age for individuals to purchase tobacco and vaping products (in conjunction with the federal regulation that is now in effect) and penalties for retailers who violate that regulation is ready for final passage in the House next week.



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Energy and Utilities

- ▲ The House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee met on Wednesday this week to consider three pieces of legislation – House Bill 1109, which is a bill seeking to clarify a telemarketer bill from the 2019 session; House Bill 1131, a bill concerning water and sewer main extensions and IURC jurisdiction; and House Bill 1165, which deals once again with the issues of property owners, renters, and who can be held responsible for paying municipal utility bills. HB 1165 is an effort to “clarify” House Enrolled Act 1347 from last year’s session, and basically prohibits property owners from being held responsible for a tenant’s utility bill unless the property owner voluntarily requests to have the utility service agreement in their name. The bill was held for potential amendment at next week’s committee meeting. Also, an Indiana Attorney General [advisory opinion](#) was issued earlier in January addressing this issue.
- ▲ The House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee is expected to meet next Wednesday to deliberate on House Bills 1327 and 1414, both authored by Committee Chairman Ed Soliday (R-Valparaiso). These bills address significant policy matters relating to the electric utility industry.
 - House Bill 1327 expands the criteria that the IN Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) shall take into consideration when acting upon a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). The bill also creates a new Power Charge Indifference Adjustment to be levied on a customer of an electric utility (investor-owned) who reduces their load, thus using less energy. This is an effort to ensure that a utility does not then shift costs to other customers of that utility. That charge would be proportionate to the reduced load customer’s share of the utility’s stranded costs from infrastructure investments or purchase power agreements.

- House Bill 1414 would prevent Indiana utilities (investor-owned, rural cooperatives and IMPA/municipally-owned) from retiring power plants early unless the retirements are required by a federal mandate or other public interest criteria. The bill sets out what constitutes an acceptable mandate and what does not. IMPA is reviewing this legislation carefully ahead of the committee meeting next week.

- ▲ The Senate Utilities Committee also met this week to discuss three bills. Senate Bill 102 asks for a study committee to look at only Indiana taxes and fees that are collected through utility, telecommunications and cable bills. Senate Bill 177 relocates the oversight of Indiana’s Broadband Ready program from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to the Office of Rural and Community Affairs (OCRA). Senate Bill 245 addresses water and wastewater utility rates and charges.
- ▲ The State House will be closed on Monday, January 20th in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The General Assembly will get back to work on Tuesday.

Please see this week’s Tracking List for additional information on these and other pieces of legislation being considered by the Indiana General Assembly.

The sessions of the Indiana General Assembly are broadcast over the Internet. In order to access the daily activities of committees and all Floor activities, go to www.in.gov/iga.