

# CAPITOL NEWS UPDATE

WEEK OF JUNE 17, 2019

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## **NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN AFTER HOUSE PASSES BUDGET AND ALTERNATIVE ROAD FUNDING PLAN**

After finalizing details last Thursday, the Michigan House passed a spending plan that eliminates the sales tax on gasoline, raises the gas tax a corresponding 6% over two years, and dedicates roughly \$850 million a year to roads and infrastructure. The plan, supported by Republicans only, calls for backfilling the lost sales tax revenue to schools and local governments with a combined \$500 million in returned School Aid Fund money which was previously going to fund universities, and an estimated \$425 million in General Fund cuts from the Governor's proposed budget.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer gave guarded criticism of the House road plan, commenting that the negotiations are “only in the 4th inning of a 9-inning baseball game.”

Gov. Whitmer did, however, criticize the overall budget by calling the cuts to K-12 schools, local government and state IT spending dangerous and irresponsible.

Following the House actions, the Senate quickly zeroed out the House-passed budgets as part of the normal appropriations process, and returned them to the House as expected. This sets the stage for negotiations to begin between legislative leaders and Gov. Whitmer on both the budget and a road funding plan during summer recess – before the full legislature returns and budget conference committees begin in the fall.

## **PFAS FOAM BILLS START MOVING**

Legislation that regulates the use of firefighting foam containing PFAS was reported out of the House Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation committee in early June after several weeks of negotiations.

House Bills 4389, 4390 and 4391 would require fire departments to report if and when they use foam containing PFAS to fight a petroleum fire to the MDEQ. The legislation would also prohibit using the PFAS-containing foam for training purposes, and require all fire departments with the foam to report how much they have of it to the DEQ. The bills also require the state to adopt additional rules for the use and storage of the foam and create procedures for handling contaminated firefighter gear. The legislation now goes to the Committee on Ways and Means for further discussion.

## **MICHIGAN FARMERS GET \$15 MILLION IN AID**

After an almost unanimous vote on Thursday, the Michigan House and Senate passed a bill allocating \$15 million in grant funding to provide relief to Michigan's farmers affected by one of the rainiest planting seasons on record. The bill now goes to Gov. Whitmer's desk for her signature.

The \$15 million from House Bill 4234, sponsored by Rep. Mark Huizenga (R-Walker), can be used to help with loan origination fees and to keep interest rates low.

In order to get the funding, the Senate took an unrelated appropriations bill for the upcoming fiscal year, emptied the content and replaced it with the supplemental funding which will help farmers for the current fiscal year. The House passed the bill just hours later.

## **HOUSE BILL ADDRESSES MICROGRIDS FOR CRITICAL FACILITIES**

A bipartisan bill that would allow critical facilities like hospitals to have their own power microgrids was introduced in the House this week. Designed to protect critical facilities like hospitals or police and fire stations from loss of power during power outages and emergencies, House Bill 4477 would allow these facilities to disconnect from the main electric grid and use electricity generated through alternative sources, like solar, during outages and emergencies. These facilities are currently prohibited from generating their own renewable energy during main grid outages. The bill also includes a required study to learn more about how microgrids could be broadly implemented for residential users.

## **MM&A Briefs**

### **Governor Creates Task Force on Women's Sports**

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer formed a task force to support and promote opportunities for girls and women in sports this week by an executive order. Chaired by Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, the task force is charged with making initial findings and recommendations before March 2021.

### **Obama Staffer to Challenge Amash**

Democrat Nicholas Colvin, an Ionia native and personal aide to former President Barack Obama, announced Tuesday that he will be running against Republican U.S. Rep. Justin Amash. Colvin worked for Obama when he was a senator, and in the White House Counsel's office when he was president.

Two republicans are also challenging Amash in the primary, including Michigan Rep. Jim Lower (R-Cedar Lake) and Tom Norton from Ada.

## **Calendar of Important Events**

### **June 22 Sen. Dale Zorn (R-Ida) Fundraiser**

Location: 6 p.m., 7498 Ida East Road, Ida

### **June 23 Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland) PAC Fundraiser**

Location: 11 a.m., Otsego Club and Resort, Classic Course, Gaylord

### **Rep. Cynthia Johnson (D-Detroit) Fundraiser**

Location: 4 p.m., 4060 Montgomery Street, Detroit

**June 24 Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) Fundraiser**

Location: 9:30 a.m., The Wolverine, Acme

**Rep. Pauline Wendzel (R-Watervliet) Fundraiser**

Location: 4:30 p.m., North Pier Brewing Company, Benton Harbor

**Rep. Annette Glenn (R-Williams Twp.) Fundraiser**

Location: 6 p.m., Cottage Creamery, Midland

**June 25 Rep. Kevin Coleman (D-Westland) Fundraiser**

Location: 11:30 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

**June 26 Rep. Pauline Wendzel (R-Watervliet) Fundraiser**

Location: 8 a.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

**Rep. Steve Marino (R-Harrison Twp.) Fundraiser**

Location: 8 a.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

**Rep. Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing) Fundraiser**

Location: 12 p.m., Karoub Associates, Lansing

**Rep. Sarah Lightner (R-Springport) Fundraiser**

Location: 12 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing

**Sen. Jon Bumstead (R-Newaygo) Fundraiser**

Location: 5 p.m., Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers, Lansing, 5 p.m.

**Sen. Sylvia Santana (D-Detroit) Fundraiser**

Location: 5:30 p.m., La Pita, 22681 Newman St., Dearborn