

2019

Indiana General Assembly Report

Week Eight and Nine – Halftime Report

The week of February 18th was Committee deadline for both the House and Senate—any bills that were to survive the 2019 legislative session would need to be heard and passed by their respective committee by Thursday February 21st. This was a very intense week for many in the Statehouse as committee hearings were stacked upon one another.

You might recall our Jennifer Washburn testified on [Senate Bill 472](#) which passed the Senate by a vote of [36-4](#). SB472 deals with water and sewer utility mergers and acquisitions. We remain concerned with language in the bill which amends the definition of used and useful. While the bill limits the amended definition to the water and sewer acquisition statute, we are concerned with setting a precedent which could spill over to other sections of Title 8.

[Senate Bill 442](#) was [passed by the Senate Committee on Appropriations](#) after being amended. SB442 deals with the underground storage of carbon dioxide and is related to the proposed [Wabash Valley Resources project](#) in Terre Haute. Our Kerwin Olson testified on the bill, expressing concerns about the harmful effects of carbon sequestration, both fiscally and environmentally.

The bill author, Sen. Jon Ford (R-Terre Haute), offered an amendment on 2nd Reading to strip the language and change the bill into a recommendation that the Legislative Council assign the topic for an interim study committee to examine the geologic storage of carbon dioxide. The amendment passed by voice vote with no discussion. The amended bill was then passed by the Senate by a vote of [47-2](#). We do not expect the bill to remain a study committee as it moves to the House. Rep. Morrison (R-Brazil) is the House sponsor and we anticipate a much more intense push on this legislation now that it's in the House.

As part of the [All IN For Democracy](#) redistricting reform coalition, we stood in support of [SB 105](#), authored by Senator Greg Walker (R-Columbus), as it was voted upon before the Senate. Senator JD Ford (D-Indianapolis) [attempted to improve](#) the bill but his amendment was sadly rejected. The bill was eventually passed by the Senate, [26-23](#).

On the House side, [House Bill 1331](#), the HOA solar bill authored by Rep. Mike Speedy (R-Indianapolis) was [passed by a vote of 90-6](#). It now goes to the Senate for further action where it was placed in the committee on Judiciary and sponsored by Senator Aaron Freeman (R-Indianapolis) and Jim Merritt (R-Indianapolis).

The deadlines for bills passing their chambers of origin took place the week of February 25 with the House concluding work Monday and the Senate concluding

work Tuesday. If the introduced bill failed to pass its chamber of origin the bill is considered dead. Of the 1,344 total bills introduced this year, 218 were passed in the Senate and 201 were passed in the House, with a total of 419 bills getting through their first chamber. The remaining 925 bills failed to progress and are no longer under consideration.

At this point, bills that are still alive will go to the other chamber for consideration. These remaining bills will have to go through the same process – passing out of committee and the second chamber – to keep moving. The House and Senate committee report deadlines for the second half are April 9th and 11th respectively. All third reading votes have to be completed by April 16th.

The giant payday lending expansion in [Senate Bill 613](#) barely survived the Senate by a [vote of 26-23](#) just before the Senate adjourned on deadline day. SB613 will create new payday installment loans of up to \$1800 in addition to the current payday products Indiana already offers. Plus, with these loans, lenders can now add on fun stuff like credit insurance to make them even more expensive.

Upcoming This Week

The Senate and House take a break for the rest of the week and resume action on Monday March 4.

We anticipate a steadier course of action since fewer bills are meandering through the process although the conversation of political circles will continue to be dominated by pending bias crimes legislation and Indiana's biennial budget. We plan to continue or steadfast monitoring of all issues we identified throughout the first half of session in addition to maintaining vigilance for any 'new' issues that may arise.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lindsay Haake & Kerwin Olson