If possible, the Legislature’s pace has quickened even more so than other short sessions in years past with a large amount of committee hearings occurring this week. CAC attended meetings of the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Public Policy Committee and the House Utilities Committee in addition to monitoring legislation moving through the amendment process.

The General Assembly also began consideration of concurrence motions on bills. If a bill is amended in the second chamber (e.g. introduced House bill amended by the Senate), the bill author can decide to concur with the changes made by the bill, in which case he/she files a concurrence motion. This motion is voted on by the full chamber (House, in our example) and if the motion receives a majority vote, it is sent to the Governor for his signature or veto.

If the bill author disagrees with the changes made to the bill, he/she files a dissent motion and the bill will then be subject to the conference committee process in which differences are worked out by members of a conference committee appointed by the House Speaker and Senate President Pro-Tem. A conference committee report is then prepared and voted on by both chambers with an affirmative vote in each chamber sending the bill to the Governor for his consideration.

Good news came early in the week when the “No-More-Stringent-Than” bill, HB 1082, authored by Rep. Dave Wolkins (R-Winona Lake) was reduced to an IDEM reporting bill—a much less harmful initiative. Sen. Ed Charbonneau (R-Valparaiso), the Committee Chair, showed a tremendous amount of leadership in negotiating the issue and continues to shepherd the bill throughout the legislative process as the bill will go the full Senate for a vote next week.

In the House Utilities Committee Wednesday, CAC testified in support of Senate Bill 383. The bill creates a mechanism to stabilize revenues for purposes of water infrastructure improvements and maintenance, and the bill includes a strong policy statement from the legislature regarding the need to ensure utility bills are affordable for current and future generations of Hoosiers. While CAC supports the bill, we issued extreme concern for the sole amendment passed by the committee which exempts industrial customers from paying their fair share. SB383 is authored by Sen. Ed Charbonneau (R-Valparaiso) and passed the committee 12-0.

On Tuesday the Senate passed House Bill 1053 which would prohibit local governments from regulating plastic bags. Sadly, the issue received little media attention until well after the bill was on its way to the Governor (Tim Swarens, Indy Star).

Upcoming Next Week

• The Senate is scheduled to debate amendments to HB1082 on Monday with a vote as early as Tuesday
• The House is scheduled to debate SB 383 on Second Reading Monday with a vote as early as Tuesday
• The House is scheduled to vote on SB15, a bill that directs the Legislature to study the issue of food deserts

Respectfully Submitted,
Lindsay Shipps
Government Affairs