

## Minnesota Government Update - Week in Review

Posted by [John A. Knapp](#) on May 16, 2011

### Moving Forward

The last and biggest deadline of the session is the constitutional adjournment deadline of May 23. There remains an enormous amount of work to be done before then. From finishing and passing conference committee reports, the yet elusive stadium deal and a constitutional amendment to define marriage, the work seems almost insurmountable. Both the House and Senate met Saturday to plow through some of the bills waiting in the queue.

Longtime legislators and lobbyists are predicting the need for a Special Session. It will be a wait and see attitude through the remaining days. In the meantime, Gov. Dayton and legislative leaders were on Lake Pokegama in Grand Rapids for the Minnesota fishing opener on Saturday morning.

### HHS Conference Committees Complete Work

The strategy coming from the Republican majority in regard to negotiations with DFL Governor Dayton on the budget bills has evolved. The Legislative Committee on the Health and Human Services bill completed a "draft" bill that will be used to negotiate with the Governor. In the Health and Human Services Conference Committee meeting, Chair Abeler (R-Anoka) said he is hopeful for a long list of those portions of the bill the Governor supports. Abeler and Senate Chair David Hann (R-Eden Prairie) indicated their willingness to meet with the Governor or his staff at any time to explain the elements of the bill and listen to other ideas.

HHS Commissioner Jesson was present at the hearing and her closing comments included accolades for "a step forward to present a single position...this is a more financially responsible bill." She also remarked that cutting \$1.6 billion from the HHS budget will hurt many needy people. The Commissioner also used one of the popular agency sound bites of the session stating, "the Governor has said he wants to see the complete budget package all at once, I hope we are able to work together."

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## Two Vikings Stadium Plans and One Ballpark

One day after Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak unveiled his plan for replacing the Metrodome and remodeling the Target Center, Ramsey County Commissioners Tony Bennett and Rafael Ortega and Vikings owner Zygi Wilf held a joint press conference announcing they had reached an agreement to build a new stadium at the old ammunition plant in the Ramsey County suburb of Arden Hills.

Both plans require action by a Legislature that has been at best lukewarm this session on taking up the stadium issue. While a deal between the Vikings and Arden Hills appears to have that plan as the front runner, most of the Ramsey County legislative delegation oppose the proposed plan. Adding fuel to the fire, Saint Paul Saints owner Mike Veeck made the rounds at the Capitol this week, pushing for a new ballpark for his independent baseball team, the Saint Paul Saints.