

Minnesota Government Update - Week in Review

Posted by [John A. Knapp](#) on February 18, 2011

Nuclear Moratorium Bill Passes off the House Floor

After three hours of debate and multiple DFL sponsored amendments, SF 4, the bill to repeal the nuclear plant moratorium, authored by Representative Joyce Peppin (R-Rogers), passed off the floor on a 81 – 50 roll call vote. The only amendment that passed was offered by Representative Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Minneapolis). It places a restriction on reprocessing spent fuel into weapons-grade plutonium. This amendment meets one of the three conditions outlined by Governor Dayton as needing to be met before he would sign off on the bill. Still missing from the bill are rate payer protections and assurances of no net increases in nuclear waste.

Regents Named

After 46 people applied, 16 were interviewed and the final four candidates for the Board of Regents have been recommended for approval after a joint hearing of the House and Senate Higher Education Committees. Steve Sviggum, David Larson, and David McMillan representing the second, third, and eighth congressional districts, respectively. Laura Brod for the at-large seat received the recommendation from the committee. The vote left DFLers feeling frustrated; Representative Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) stated, “[...]bipartisanship at the Board of Regents has ended.” The final legislature vote has been scheduled for Monday, with a joint meeting of the House and Senate, and will likely be contentious.

Budget Deep Dives

After Governor Dayton released his budget on Tuesday, many committees spent the rest of the week inviting agency commissioners and assistant commissioners for a deep dive into explanations of the Governor’s recommendations. In the House Health and Human Services Finance committee, members had few questions on the Minnesota Department of Health recommendations but asked the Department of Human Services assistant commissioners to return with more detailed explanations of many of their proposed cuts. With 60 freshmen between the House and Senate, developing an understanding of very complicated budgets is a daunting task. Committees will continue to be busy over the next two weeks as they work through Governor Dayton’s recommendations.