

Minnesota Government Update - Week in Review

Posted by [Christine M. Zimmer](#) on March 04, 2011

Bill Introductions Lag

If you're thinking the pace of bill introductions at the Minnesota Capitol is slower this session than in prior sessions, you are right. In 2007 and 2009, by the beginning of March, there were already well over one thousand bills introduced in both the House and the Senate. For the 2011 session, just over one thousand bills have been introduced in both houses together. The specific numbers are outlined below.

- As of March 1, 2011: 778 bills introduced in the House and 532 bills introduced in the Senate
- As of March 2, 2009: 1284 bills introduced in the House and 1124 bills introduced in the Senate
- As of March 1, 2007: 1623 bills introduced in the House and 1456 bills introduced in the Senate

Environmental Review Bill Becomes Law

HF 1, a top House Republican priority for 2011, streamlines the environmental permitting process at both the Department of Natural Resources and the Pollution Control Agency. Gov. Dayton signed the bill into law Thursday evening and released a letter he sent to the bill authors. In the letter he describes his motives for signing the bill as a "...desire to streamline and improve the permitting process to help responsible businesses locate or expand in Minnesota and create new jobs for our citizens." The measure was strongly opposed by environmental groups. On Monday, it had passed the House floor on an 89 to 42 vote.

Alternative Teacher Licensure

The alternative teacher licensure pathways bill passed off the Senate floor on a 46 to 19 vote on Thursday after being amended in conference committee. SF 40, authored by Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrista) modifies certain teacher licensure provisions and establishes an alternative teacher preparation program and limited-term teacher license. It also requires Board of Teaching interim reports and alternative preparation for teachers. Sen. Teri Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka) spoke on the floor in support of the bill saying this version of the bill was "a much stronger bill for our children and our schools than when we began because it was a team effort." Minority Leader Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) spoke of his concerns that the bill was drafted behind closed doors where the public was not welcomed. A few hours later, the House also passed the legislation on a 81 to 50 vote. The Governor's office released a letter on Monday stating, as a result of the

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compromises agreed upon, he intended to sign the bill should it pass as outlined. The measure was opposed by the state's teacher's union, Education Minnesota.

Nuke Bill Goes to Conference Committee

A conference committee has been selected for SF 4, the nuclear moratorium repeal authored by Majority Leader Amy Koch (R-Buffalo). Members include Sens. Koch, Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont), and Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) and Reps. Joyce Peppin (R-Rogers), Joe Hoppe (R-Chaska), and Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul). The conference committee was requested after the Senate rejected the House version of the bill, which had been amended by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Minneapolis), to include a provision that put a restriction on reprocessing spent nuclear fuel into weapons-grade plutonium. Gov. Dayton has given three criteria that must be in place before he will sign the bill. The Kahn amendment meets one of these criteria; the other two require ratepayer protection and no net increases in nuclear waste. No conference committee meetings have yet been scheduled.