

Minnesota Government Update - Week in Review - April 15, 2011

Posted by [John A. Knapp](#) on April 15, 2011

First Omnibus Bill Signed by the Governor

The House and Senate passed the Conference Committee report on the Omnibus Agriculture Bill on Thursday. The House voted 107-20 in favor of the bill, and the Senate passed it 52-9. HF1039/SF1016 appropriates \$76.8 million from the General Fund. Provisions include a one-time increase in funding to hire more retail food-handler inspectors. Of all the omnibus bills, this is the one that most closely matched the Governor's recommendations, and he signed it into law today.

Governor's Tax Bill Gets Taxing Hearing

When offered the chance, 42 people requested the opportunity to testify on Governor Dayton's tax proposals. In the time allotted during the hearing in the Tax Committee, chaired by Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), there were only three people able to testify. The hearing once again showcased the significant gap between Governor Dayton's position in support of tax increases and the Republican's stand of "no new taxes." The packed hearing room included one audience member who continually made inappropriate outbursts. The Chair ultimately requested the Sergeant at Arms remove the individual from the hearing. The bill was laid over and Chair Davids stated he intended to take the bill up again after the Easter break. The bill's companion, SF925, authored by Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville), awaits action by the Senate Tax Committee.

Vikings Stadium

Ziggy Wilf, owner of the Minnesota Vikings, was at the Capitol this week indicating optimism on a deal for a new Vikings stadium. Bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate that lay out a framework for financing a stadium with a price tag of \$900 million. The bills have taxpayers responsible for about two-thirds of the costs mostly using a series of sales tax hikes and the Vikings financing one-third of the total cost. All three stadium sites discussed earlier in the year are still in play: the Arden Hills Army ammunition plant; a parcel of land near the new Twins stadium; and the Metrodome site. Wilf gave no indication which site he preferred. If all goes according to plan, a deal for a site will be reached within several weeks, and that deal will replace the current language in the bill, according to Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead) the author of the House bill. Thursday's visit by Wilf was his first of the year and was more symbolic than influential or strategic with most of the conversations between Wilf and

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lawmakers being polite but not detailed or deep. Probably the most striking comment made by Wilf was his denial of any talks to sell the team.

Omnibus Bills

Conference committees are up and running but little action was taken this week. Several of the omnibus bills received their initial walk-through's and side by side comparisons but little discussion by members was held in any of the hearings. Majority Leader Matt Dean (R-Dellwood) said on the House floor this week that the plan is to work through negotiations with the Governor while the bills are in conference committee. Longer conference committee's are expected after the Legislature returns on April 26 from the Easter/Passover break which begins on Monday, April 18.