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REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY W. MOORE'S RALEIGH REPORT

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Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2015 10:27 PM



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For Immediate Release

May 26, 2015

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY W. MOORE'S RALEIGH REPORT

COMMITTEES

House Finance Committee

The Committee met Monday, May 18, to consider the finance portions of [H 97](#), 2015 Appropriations Act. After over two hours of debate and discussion of amendments, the Committee approved the package and re-referred the bill to the House Appropriations Committee. Key finance provisions of H 97 include: the authorization of up to \$270 million in general obligation indebtedness for various building projects; a two-year extension of the renewable energy tax credit; authorization of an historic preservation tax credit; allowance of an income tax deduction for medical expenses; extension of sales tax preferences related to motorsports; creation of sales tax preferences related to data centers; and increases in numerous DMV fees.

Senate Commerce Committee

The Committee met twice this week. On Tuesday, May 19, the Committee approved one bill. [H 332](#), Energy Policy Amendments, would provide recovery of capital related to costs incurred by a natural gas utility for constructing natural gas infrastructure for a large manufacturing employer and amend the laws related to energy policy. A proposed committee substitute was adopted during the meeting, which added language to the original bill that would freeze the state's renewable energy portfolio standard.

On last Thursday, the Committee approved two bills. [H 909](#), Sale of Antique Spirituous Liquor, would authorize and regulate the sale of antique spirituous liquor. [S 716](#), Mountain Energy Act of 2015, would direct the NC Utilities Commission to render an expedited decision, under certain conditions, on an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for an applicant to construct a generating facility that uses natural gas as the primary fuel. The bill would also modify certain requirements under the Coal Ash Management Act of 2014 for coal ash surface impoundments located on sites at which all coal-fired generating units present on those sites will permanently cease operations by January 31, 2020.

Senate Finance Committee

The Committee met on Wednesday, May 20, and approved four bills. [S 218](#), Town of Franklin/Satellite Annexation; [S 256](#), Durham Voluntary Annexation/Adjacent Streets; and S 141, Waynesville Annexation/Referendum.

The Committee also approved [H 332](#), Energy Policy Amendments. H 332 would provide recovery of capital related costs incurred by a natural gas utility for constructing natural gas infrastructure for a large manufacturing employer and would freeze the state's renewable energy portfolio standard.

Senate Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources Committee

The Committee met Wednesday, May 20, and passed four bills. [H 574](#), Opossum Exclusion From Wildlife Laws, aims to exclude opossums from wildlife regulation from December 29 through January 2 to allow for a New Year's Eve event that involves lowering an

opossum at midnight to celebrate the new year. [S 573](#), Strengthen Oyster Industry, promotes the growth of the State's oyster farming industry. [S 486](#), NC Trail Expansion/Economic Corridors, seeks to enhance economic development through the expansion of the state trails network. [H 795](#), SEPA Reform, seeks to reform and amend the State Environmental Policy Act.

In The News

[After Delays, Budget Finally Heads to House Floor](#)

House GOP leaders scheduled another committee meeting Thursday to make changes to the two-year spending plan originally expected to spend more than \$22 billion annually. Rules Committee Chairman David Lewis says a new version of the budget will reduce those proposed spending increases by \$250 million, most in the first year. He says Division of Motor Vehicles fees anticipated to go up by 50 percent will be scaled back, as will tax credits. The changes come as conservative groups have urged lawmakers to oppose the original plan.

[Major Donor Withdraws Cash Over House Budget](#)

Raleigh businessman Bob Luddy, who chairs the board of the conservative Civitas Institute think tank and is an influential financial supporter of conservative candidates, emailed a sharp critique of the House budget to House Republicans, who are in the majority. Luddy complained that the budget advancing to a major vote on Thursday does not include new tax cuts and extends tax breaks for specific industries. He called the spending plan too "liberal" and said he's decided to withhold his planned, annual donation to the House Republicans' campaign committee. With his email, Luddy entered and helped to crystallize a budget debate in which the priorities of Gov. Pat McCrory and House Speaker Tim Moore do not appear to be in line with that of Senate leaders and several conservative advocacy groups.

[Hospital Association Rolls Out Medicaid Reform Proposal](#)

The N.C. Hospital Association is wading into the debate about state Medicaid reform, predictably encouraging a provider-led format to address the risk involved in the \$14 billion program. At the request of legislative leaders, the advocacy group Thursday offered recommendations and submitted a draft bill. The proposed legislation likely would require being inserted into an existing bill, potentially the state budget, to move forward this session. The Medicaid program covers about 1.9 million North Carolinians. It has had a nearly \$2 billion financing gap since the start of the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Two House and two Senate Medicaid reform bills have failed so far to gain a ground-swell of support.

[Last State Budget Included Surprise Fees for Store Owners](#)

The impact of the last state budget hit R.L. Bass's mailbox a few months back.

Bass – who has owned a small country store in Nash County for 57 years – was reviewing his annual renewal notice from the N.C. Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission. He said he was surprised to learn that the cost of selling beer had doubled from \$200 to \$400. The paperwork didn't explain the change, and Bass said calls to the ABC Commission and the governor's office haven't yielded answers. "Nobody up there will tell you anything," he said. Bass said his beer sales don't justify the higher fee. "It'll take me four months out of the year, selling beer out of this one little cooler, to make enough money just to pay the tax," he said.

[For Well Owners, Coal Ash Questions Remain](#)

Dozens of well owners near coal ash ponds across North Carolina will have to wait longer to learn whether their drinking water contains a cancer-causing compound primarily found in industrial waste... state environmental regulators have been working with private laboratories to test about 300 wells located within 1,000 feet of the unlined dumps where Duke Energy stores the byproduct of electricity generation. The state was still waiting on about half of those results as of April 30, and based on testing, has already recommended that 123 well owners no longer drink the water. But nearly one-third of the wells need to be sampled all over again because the labs couldn't determine exactly how much of a compound called hexavalent chromium is in the water. Hexavalent chromium is notable because, unlike many of the elements on the testing list, experts say it rarely occurs naturally. It's also commonly found in coal ash.

[Judge Halts NC Fracking](#)

A judge has halted the approval of fracking operations in North Carolina until a higher court weighs in on the legality of the appointment of several boards that manage state resources and the environment. Wake County Superior Court Judge Donald W. Stephens' decision earlier this month prevents the Mining and Energy Commission from approving drilling units for hydraulic fracturing until the state Supreme Court decides a separate case regarding how the state panels are formed. No drilling units had been approved before the judge issued his order. Stephens issued a preliminary injunction that stops the commission from accepting or processing applications for drilling units for hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. The process involves injecting water, sand and chemicals to break apart underground rocks so oil and gas can escape.

CALENDAR

Wed, May 27, 2015

10:00 AM **[Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources \(Senate\)](#)**

12:30 PM **[Judiciary III \(House\)](#)**

Criminal Law/Filing False Document. ([S83](#))

Custodial Parent/Party Cooperate w/Child Supp. ([S114](#))
Landlord/Tenant-Alias & Pluries Summary Eject. ([S269](#))
Register of Deeds/Filing False Marriage Docs. ([S311](#))
Amend Uniform Interstate Family Support Act.-AB ([S488](#))

Please remember that you can listen to committee meetings and press conferences on the General Assembly's website at www.ncleg.net. Once on the site, select "Audio," and then make your selection – House Chamber, Senate Chamber, Appropriations Committee Room or Press Conference Room. A schedule of committee meetings and other events is also available on the website.

Ariel Smith, Corresponding Secretary

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