

Ohio Township Association Legislative Alert



January 12, 2018

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Legislative Activity This Week

Tuesday, January 9

House Ways & Means

[HB 343 PROPERTY VALUES](#) (Merrin) To require local governments that contest property values to formally pass an authorizing resolution for each contest and to notify property owners.

Sponsor Merrin offered an amendment, which was accepted by the Committee, that would allow a political subdivision to combine parcel challenges into one vote at a public meeting and require notification to be mailed to the tax mailing address on file and the physical address of the property, if there is a discrepancy. Jeff Dornbusch, Treasurer of the Port Clinton City School District, testified against the bill. No vote was taken on the bill.

[HB 371 PROPERTY TAX](#) (Merrin) To exempt from property taxation the increased value of land subdivided for residential development until construction commences or the land is sold.

A coalition of local government groups - including the County Auditors' Association of Ohio, the Ohio School Boards Association, the Ohio Township Association, the County Commissioners Association, the Ohio Library Council, the Ohio Municipal League and others - reiterated opposition to the bill. Rep. Schaffer said he'd like to talk internally about the prospect of opt-in language, similar to SB 235 passed in the 131st General Assembly. James E. Moline Builders Inc. provided written proponent testimony. Greater Ohio Policy Institute testified as an interested party stating the bill could cause communities to lose out on revenue because their infrastructure building efforts - like putting in new roads - won't result in property value increases during the freeze. No vote was taken on the bill.

House Finance

[HB 281 BROADBAND EXPANSION](#) (Carfagna) To establish the residential broadband expansion program within the Development Services Agency to award matching grants for last mile broadband expansion in municipal corporations and townships and to make an appropriation.

The committee accepted five amendments offered by Rep. Scott Ryan. He said the amendments: clarify that satellite broadcasting and wireless internet service providers are included in the bill; ensure that areas receiving Connect America funds aren't eligible for the program; enable providers to use letters of credit to demonstrate financial assurance; specify that broadband facilities must be operated for an unlimited period of time; and adjust language regarding the ability of a provider to provide broadband services as described in the proposal. The Ohio Farm Bureau testified in support of the measure telling the committee that agriculture educators, in particular, are excited about it.

Discussion with Rep. Blessing - Type 2 annexations

Meeting with the Auditor of State's Office - credit card legislation, theft in office penalties, councils of governments

Wednesday, January 10

House Government Accountability & Oversight

[HB 382 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION](#) (Schuring) To modify terms describing payments made under the Unemployment Compensation Law, to increase the amount of wages subject to unemployment compensation premiums, to require qualifying employees to make payments to the Unemployment Compensation Insurance Fund, to allow the Director of Job and Family Services to adjust maximum weekly benefit amounts, to reduce the maximum number of benefit weeks, and to make other changes to the Unemployment Compensation Law.

The Ohio AFL-CIO, testified in opposition to the bill. The Ohio Poverty Law Center, outlined four areas of concern in their testimony and Policy Matters Ohio, said that while the bill is an improvement over previous efforts, the proposal isn't a 50/50 deal between employers and workers. Also testifying were Advocates for Ohio's Future.

[HB 342 TAX LEVIES](#) (Merrin) To permit local tax-related proposals to appear only on general and primary election ballots and not on an August special election ballot and to modify the information conveyed in election notices and ballot language for property tax levies.

The committee accepted a substitute version of the bill that Chairman Rep. Louis Blessing (R-Cincinnati) said would allow emergency or temporary levies to be placed on the August ballot, among other exceptions, and would require the millage to be listed based on \$100,000 of fair market value. The Union County Commissioners testified in support of the bill and the Ohio Municipal League testified in opposition.

Meeting with Rep. Stein & interested parties - apiaries and liability

Meeting with Reps. Cera and Smith & interested parties - broadband grants

House Republican Caucus announced replacements for vacancies:

81st District - Jim Hoops (*previously served in the House in the 2000's*)

87th District - Riordan McClain (*seat was previously held by his father, Jeff McClain*)

Winter Conference Volunteers Needed

Please consider helping!

The Association is looking for **Sergeant-at-Arms** volunteers for all workshops. These positions are very important and at the same time, difficult to fill.

Sergeant-at-arms are required to be at their assigned workshop a few minutes early and duties include passing out handouts, reminding conference goers to turn off or silence cell phones, and contact an OTA or Convention Center staff person if temperature changes or additional supplies are needed. We do our best to assign you to the workshop(s) of your choice. **[To view the sessions in need of Sergeants-at-Arms, please click here.](#)**

If you are interested in serving as a Sergeant-at-Arms, please contact Heidi Fought at **fought@ohiotownships.org**.

Recently Introduced Legislation

[HB 459 WORKERS' COMPENSATION](#) (Henne) To allow groups of employers to be granted status as a self-insuring employer for purposes of the Workers' Compensation Law.

[HB 460 RIPARIAN BUFFERS](#) (Patterson, Sheehy) To exempt qualifying riparian buffers in the Western Basin of Lake Erie from property taxation, to reimburse local taxing units for resulting revenue losses, and to require soil and water conservation districts to assist landowners with the creation and maintenance of riparian buffers.

Legislative Committee Schedules For Next Week

Tuesday, January 16

Senate Finance (Ch. Oelslager, 466-0626), Finance Hearing Rm., 1 p.m.

HB 168 CEMETERY REGISTRATION (Stein) To modify duties of the Division of Real Estate in the Department of Commerce regarding cemetery registration, to specify cemetery owners must reasonably maintain cemeteries, to establish the Cemetery Grant Program, and to make an appropriation.

1st Hearing-Sponsor

HB 251 SUBDIVISION INVESTMENTS (Greenspan) To increase from five to ten years the maturity period of other political subdivision's bonds and obligations eligible for investment of a subdivision's interim moneys, a county's inactive moneys, and money in the county public library fund.

1st Hearing-Sponsor

House Energy & Natural Resources (Ch. Landis, 466-8035), Rm. 018, 2:30 p.m.

HB 225 OIL GAS WELLS (Thompson) To allow a landowner to report an idle and orphaned well or abandoned well, to require the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management to inspect and classify such a well, to require the Chief to begin plugging a well classified as distressed-high priority within a specified time period, and to authorize an income tax deduction for reimbursements paid by the state to a landowner for costs incurred to plug an idle or orphaned well.

5th Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote

HB 422 WATER SEWER ACQUISITIONS (Ginter, Rogers) To govern acquisitions of municipal water-works and sewage disposal system companies by certain larger nonmunicipal water-works or sewage disposal system companies.

2nd Hearing-Proponent

HB 393 BRINE SALES (DeVitis, O'Brien) To authorize a person to sell brine derived from an oil and gas operation that is processed as a commodity for use in surface application in deicing, dust suppression, and other applications.

2nd Hearing-Proponent

Wednesday, January 17

House Government Accountability & Oversight (Ch. Blessing, 466-9091), Rm. 114, 2:30 p.m. or after session

HB 382 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (Schuring) To modify terms describing payments made under the Unemployment Compensation Law, to increase the amount of wages subject to unemployment compensation premiums, to require qualifying employees to make payments to the Unemployment Compensation Insurance Fund, to allow the Director of Job and Family Services to adjust maximum weekly benefit amounts, to reduce the maximum number of benefit weeks, and to make other changes to the Unemployment Compensation Law.

8th Hearing-All testimony

HJR 4 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (Schuring) Proposing to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to allow the General Assembly to provide by law for the issuance of bonds to pay unemployment compensation benefits when the fund created for that purpose is or will be depleted or to repay outstanding advances made by the federal government to the unemployment compensation program.

8th Hearing-All testimony



Federal Update

President Trump signs executive order on rural broadband Internet

Trump signed the executive order on rural broadband Internet service at a table on stage. It declares the executive branch will "use all viable tools" to accelerate the deployment and adoption of affordable and reliable broadband connectivity in rural America. Executive departments "should seek to reduce barriers to capital investment, remove obstacles to broadband services and more efficiently employ government resources," the order goes on to say.

"Those towers are going to go up, and you're going to have great, great broadband," Trump said, flanked by the state's Tennessee Republican congressional delegation as well as its GOP governor, Bill Haslam. The order does not appear to allocate any financial resources to the broadband effort, an area that also has been Haslam's priority.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will be required to develop a plan to support rural broadband deployment, according to a memo to the secretary from the White House.

The executive order coincides with the release of recommendations from a task force established last year that seeks to make several improvements to the country's rural areas. The task force's recommendations are set to include measures seeking to enhance broadband access, improving quality of life, generate a reliable workforce, advance technological innovations and economic development.

Brown pushes bridge funding proposal as White House preps transportation plan

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown is behind a bill that would funnel federal dollars toward some of the 6,400 bridges in the state that need replaced or repaired. The Cleveland Democrat recently introduced the so-called Bridge Investment Act, which would allocate \$75 billion for bridge repairs and upgrades throughout the country. Bridge repairs needed nationally total \$30-123 billion of which comes from Ohio bridges identified as being functionally obsolete or structurally deficient, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. In addition to providing formula funding to states to spend on bridges, the bill will also require the use of American-made products - a tenet Sen. Brown said any larger infrastructure legislation should also include if it's going to receive his support.

Water Quality Grants Available

Ohio EPA is soliciting proposals for subawards awarded under provisions of Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act. Subawards in varying amounts will be awarded to local governments, park districts and other organizations for the implementation of projects to restore Ohio streams, reduce loadings of nonpoint source pollutants such as nutrients, sediment and/or projects that undo damage caused by hydromodification or the alteration of stream or riparian habitat. These subawards provide up to sixty percent (60%) of total project costs and are awarded for three-year terms. Local participants must provide forty percent (40%) of total project costs either through in-kind services and/or cash.



Subaward applications with projects meeting the following criteria will receive additional scoring during the review:

1. Nutrient reduction projects within the Lake Erie watershed
2. Wetland restoration especially when using Lake Erie tributary dredge sediments
3. Project will generate measurable water quality benefits
4. Projects where the sponsor has clear jurisdiction and management capacity
5. Applicants with demonstrated capacity and track record administering federal grant funds
6. Applicant has successfully completed Ohio EPA subawards
7. Proposed project is ready to proceed
8. The watershed in which the project site is located exhibits a reasonable likelihood of restorability
9. Projects that enhance (but do not duplicate) previously funded nonpoint source projects

Eligible Applicants: The following entities are eligible to apply for and receive grant funding awarded under Section 319(h):

- * Local municipalities, counties and townships
- * County and municipal park districts
- * Soil & water conservation districts
- * 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation and watershed organizations

For more information, please visit the Ohio EPA's website by [clicking here](#).

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