New Hampshire Legislative Update
MARCH 2019

State News:
Highlighting the month of March in the New Hampshire legislature was work by the House of Representatives on the state’s two-year operating and capital budgets. Of note, the budget aims to move the N.H. Job Training Fund from the Department of Economic and Business Affairs to the Department of Employment Security. The proposal also includes an additional $5,000,000 for the N.H. Housing Finance Authority’s “affordable housing fund” which provides use as matching funds for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations on projects aimed at low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

Additionally, as part of the Majority Democratic Party Caucus’ agenda is a halt to Business Profits Tax and Business Enterprise Tax reductions. Another item of note is the Majority’s proposal for a “Capital Gains” tax of 5%, which opponents believe some of which already is taxed; thus, the revenue estimates are high, and look at the tax as stifling innovation and investment.

There is plenty in the House version of the budget bills the Governor does not like, but the Senate must take its turn over the next two months. If the Governor and legislature cannot agree on a new two-year operating budget, it is expected that a continuing resolution to fund state government at current levels would be adopted.

Issues Update:

Requirement For The Inspection Of Timber
This year NHRLA-requested legislation that repeals an outdated and unused statute. HB 162, Repealing The Requirement For The Inspection Of Timber repeals RSA 347, “Inspection of Lumber”. , has passed the House and has had its public hearing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on March 26th. Rick Pierson of Mid-State Lumber attended the hearing and registered support on behalf of NHRLA. The hearing itself was brief and included support from the N.H. Timberland Owners Association. As of this writing the committee had not yet made its recommendation on the bill, but we expect it to pass. The bill repeals RSA 347, “Inspection of Lumber”.

Employee Scheduling
This bill, also known as “Restrictive Scheduling”, was recommended by the Senate Commerce Committee to be “re-referred”, meaning the committee will keep the bill though Fall and make a recommendation for action by the Senate is 2020. The sponsor had indicated they wished for an amendment, but it was not presented, thus the committee held off action until next year. Several industries oppose the bill, and several have asked for exemptions, including the N.H Lodging & Restaurant Association, General Contractors Association, Hospital Association and Retail Association.

Paid Family Leave
The legislature, primarily riding on partisan votes, has sent SB 1 to the Governor, and that bill is well on its way through the formal process that gets it to the Governor’s desk. The House Democrats have added that language to HB 2, which contains statutory policy to enact the revenue expected and appropriations made in HB 1, the budget bill. The issue via SB 1 has been going through the legislative process at an expedited pace in order to get it to the Governor early, yet just below the surface. Once the Governor acts on the bill, and a veto is expected and virtually announced, the negotiations on the issue will come front-and-center.

Questions?
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