State News:

Governor Cuomo’s $175 billion spending plan for the 2019-2020 fiscal year dominated the legislative agenda in February. Cuomo’s Budget priorities were in line with his claim to advance the most progressive agenda that New York has ever seen, including reforming the criminal justice system, passing a “Green New Deal”, tuition assistance for undocumented immigrants, as well as a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags, and expansion of the bottle bill. The other topic that is creating a buzz in Albany (pardon the pun) is the legalization of adult-use cannabis, which is projected to bring in $300 million in tax revenue.

The Legislature took an extended break following the last Budget hearing and returned to Albany prepared to assemble their own spending proposals as they work toward producing an on-time Budget by the April 1 deadline.

Issues Update:

Retainage

A.574 (Braunstein) Last year, Senator Amedore (R) was the Senate sponsor to our bill, but since he is in the minority now, we are looking for a strong Democratic sponsor for our bill. This year our bill has five new co-sponsors: Assemblymembers Lupardo, Crespo, Woerner, Steck, and Bronson.

Unemployment Insurance Reform

S.327 / A.1004 (Akshar / Kolb) This bill would provide that employers are not liable for unemployment benefits for an employee who voluntarily leaves their employment and later files for unemployment from a subsequent employer. We will work on getting a Democratic sponsor in the Assembly to give it a better chance of passage.

Unfair Religious Exemptions by the Amish

We are continuing to educate legislators on the importance of leveling the playing field with the Amish builders that do not have to pay taxes or workers compensation. This is an unfair advantage to lumber retailers and builders that must abide by NYS tax laws.

Paint Stewardship

S.3541 / A. 1463 (Kennedy / Stirpe) was introduced. This is the bill that we support, as it contains our “hold harmless” language that protects retailers who serve as paint collection sites from being penalized for any violations associated with the collection of the paint. Last month we reported on Senator O’Mara’s introduction of a paint stewardship bill that did not contain our hold harmless language. That bill was stricken, and O’Mara joined Kennedy on his legislation.

Commercial Claims

We will get a bill introduced to increase the limit from the current $5,000 to $10,000 for commercial claims and small claims courts.

Events:

New York Lobby Day will be held on May 6 in Albany. Stay tuned for more details so you can plan ahead to attend and lobby our elected officials on our NRLA-specific issues. For more information please contact Jamie McCormick at jmccormick@nrla.org.

Questions?

Please contact Kirk Ives, Director of Government Affairs at 518-880-6376 or kives@nrla.org.