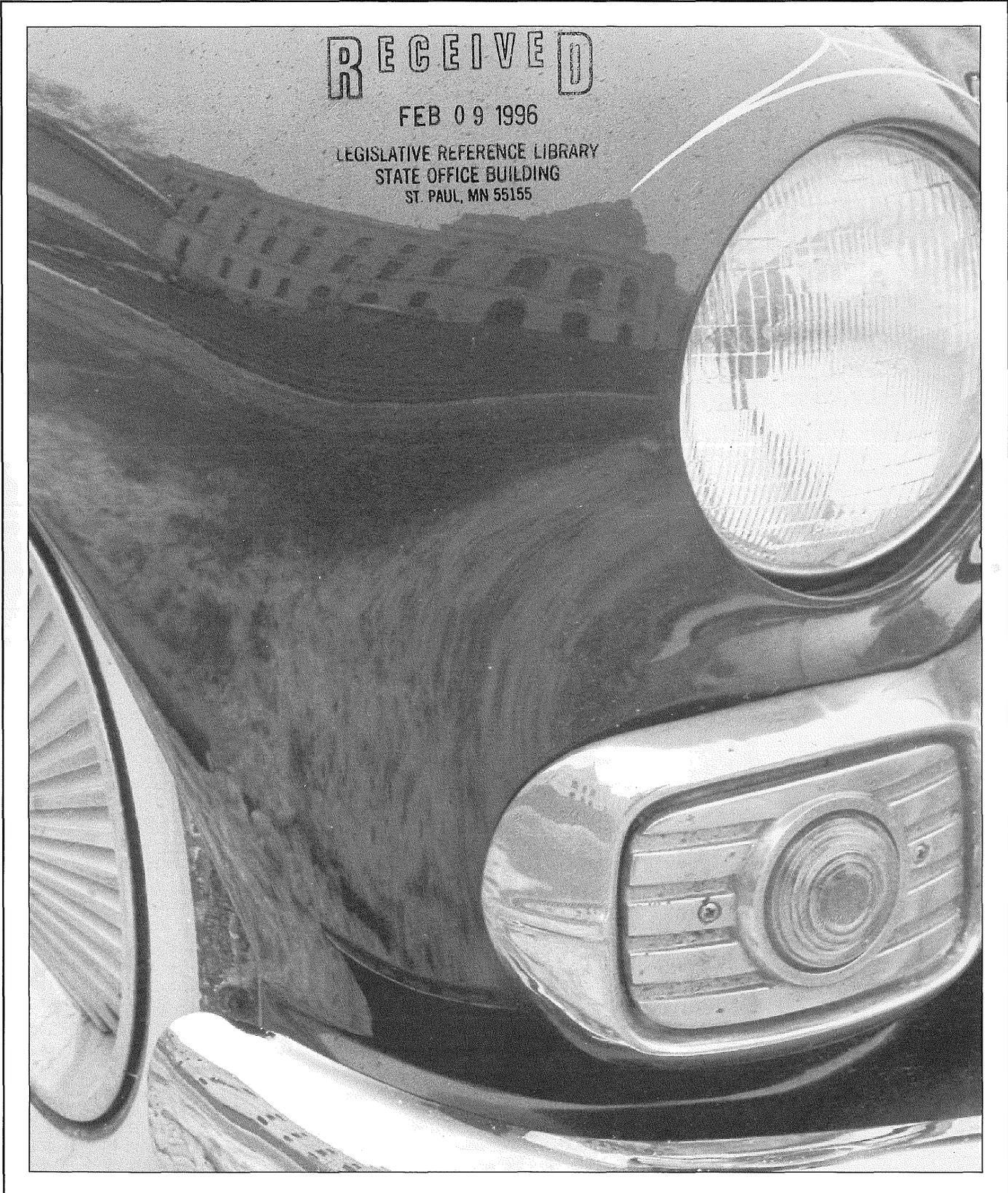


96, Feb. 9

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SESSION WEEKLY

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SESSION WEEKLY

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Responsible land use — A watered-down version of Rep. Myron Orfield's controversial land use plan won approval from the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 7. The bill is similar to others Orfield has introduced in each of the past three sessions to establish a statewide comprehensive land use plan. **Page 6**

Gang resistance — Currently, school districts can collect an extra \$1 in taxes per resident to help pay for school police officers and drug abuse prevention programs. A bill approved by a House panel would increase that amount to up to \$3 per district resident to help pay for programs that teach children how to resist gangs. **Page 8**

Time off for kids — A bill to allow parents to take a few hours of unpaid time off to attend their child's school play or parent-teacher conference — regardless of how long they've worked for a company — passed the House Feb. 8. The vote was 128-3. **Page 8**

Outbreak — A bill designed to help the Department of Natural Resources more effectively contain the spread of harmful exotic species won approval from the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 2. **Page 10**

Expanding MinnesotaCare — Minnesota adults who earn up to one-and-a-half times the federal poverty level would be eligible for MinnesotaCare, the state's program to provide subsidized health coverage to uninsured residents, under a bill approved Feb. 8 by a House panel. **Page 11**

Short-lived apology — A bill offering a public apology to mentally handicapped people whom the state involuntarily committed to state institutions was withdrawn by its author after a House panel deleted what she considered to be important language. **Page 13**

Gas tax increase — A bill calling for a 5-cent hike in the state gas tax and for a constitutional amendment to devote some revenue to public transit was narrowly approved Feb. 2 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee. **Page 16**

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On the cover: The Capitol reflected in a 1950 Mercury custom car Feb 6. The vehicle was on display as part of the Minnesota Street Rod Association's "Run to the Capitol" — an effort to persuade legislators to allow the production of ethanol-free premium fuel for use in such automobiles.

— Photo by Andrew Von Bank

Highlights

Oxygenated fuel . . .

Ethanol-free gas could hit metro-area pumps

Minnesotans who believe that ethanol is harmful to their snowmobile, boat, chain saw, and lawnmower engines would no longer have to cross the border to buy ethanol-free gasoline under a bill approved Feb. 6 by a House panel.

After more than three hours of testimony in a standing-room-only hearing room, members of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee approved HF2205, which exempts premium gasoline from a state law requiring a minimum oxygen content of 2.7 percent in gasoline.

Currently, all gasoline sold in the 10-county Twin Cities metropolitan area is required to contain 2.7 percent oxygen; the oxygenation agent most commonly used in Minnesota is ethanol, which is made from corn. After Oct. 1, 1997, the 2.7 percent requirement will extend to gasoline sold statewide.

Proponents say adding ethanol or a petroleum-based oxygenate to gasoline makes it burn cleaner, with fewer harmful emissions. From the time the law went into effect in August 1993 until October 1995, the metro-area requirement was limited to winter months, when automobile pollution control devices are least efficient. Last Oct. 1, the 10-county metropolitan area was required to



Wearing an ethanol hat in support of that additive to gasoline, Al Gedrischi of Sanborn, Minn., keeps a watchful eye on the Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee, Feb. 6. Members debated a bill that would exempt oxygenation requirements for premium gasoline.

will remove an unnecessary burden from the backs of Minnesotans."

That number includes owners of snowmobiles, boats, chain saws, lawnmowers, street rods, high-performance cars and older, collectible automobiles, none of which run well on gasoline containing ethanol, Johnson said.

Johnson also headed off accusations of

for her bill from a number of auto and motorcycle organizations, the Iron Range Raceway (currently under construction in Keewatin), resort owners, and marina operators.

Many witnesses told lawmakers that in order to protect their investments in their snowmobiles, boats, or automobiles, they are forced to cross the border into Wisconsin to buy ethanol-free gasoline.

Bob Illingworth, representing the Minnesota chapter of Motorcycle Riders of America, told the gathering that he regularly travels to Wisconsin and fills two 55-gallon drums with his gasoline of choice.

HF2205 also was backed by representatives of Amoco Petroleum Products, which some ethanol backers accused of railroading the bill through in a blatant attempt to increase the company's profits.

At one point during the hearing, Rep. John Sarna (DFL-Mpls), the committee's chair, chided Jerry Orr, executive director of the Minneapolis affiliate of the American Lung Association, for referring to HF2205 as "Amoco's bill."

Jim Simnick, supervisor of quality assurance and technical services for Amoco, testified that offering ethanol-free premium gasoline to customers who want it is nothing more

"Current Minnesota law does not offer consumers a choice. . . . This bill not only gives a choice to the consumer, it responds to the concerns of more than 200,000 Minnesotans. . . ."

—Rep. Alice Johnson

follow the law year-round.

HF2205, sponsored by Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park), would allow fuel dealers to sell ethanol-free premium gasoline across Minnesota.

"Current Minnesota law does not offer consumers a choice," Johnson told lawmakers. "This bill not only gives a choice to the consumer, it responds to the concerns of more than 200,000 Minnesotans. . . . This

sponsoring a bill that detracts from Minnesota's biggest revenue-generating industry by telling the gathering — which included dozens of corn growers who turned out to oppose HF2205 — that her bill is not anti-farming. "I grew up on a farm," she said. "I support farmers, and my voting record proves it."

Although the pro-ethanol lobby at the hearing was sizable, Johnson found support

than an issue of choice. "Amoco is not anti-ethanol; on the contrary, we're probably the largest marketer of ethanol-blended fuels in the Midwest," Sinnick told lawmakers. "But we offer consumers a choice as they have indicated their needs to us. Some folks like ethanol; some do not."

Leading the charge against Johnson's bill was Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), sponsor of the 1993 oxygenated-fuel law, who tried unsuccessfully to get committee members to support an amendment to **HF2205**.

Peterson's amendment, "offered in the spirit of compromise," would have allowed gasoline retailers to sell non-oxygenated premium gasoline from special tanks and pumps for use in aircraft, motorcycles, or snowmobiles and also would have allowed resorts, marinas, and racetracks to dispense fuel without ethanol.

Rep. Walter Perlt (DFL-Woodbury) disagreed with Peterson's assessment of his amendment. "You call this a compromise; I think it's a blatant attempt to kill the bill," Perlt said.

Among those groups that urged the committee to defeat the bill were the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, several farm and environmental organizations, Cenex Inc., Ashland Inc. (the parent company of SuperAmerica, which operates gasoline retailers across Minnesota), and the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, based in Minneapolis.

The Minnesota Association of Cooperatives, which works with the state's six currently operating ethanol plants and four new ones that are in the works, weighed in with written testimony opposing the legislation.

"The most important issues in the debate over **HF2205** are not being discussed," wrote Allen Gerber, the association's president. "The improvement to the environment, adding value to corn, increasing jobs in rural Minnesota are all important issues."

However, Gerber said, the committee should be more concerned about the financial investments of Minnesota farmers in ethanol cooperatives: "If ethanol plants fail, it will not be a large corporation that suffers, but individual farmers throughout Minnesota," he wrote. "... I encourage the committee not to reverse policy. Individual farmers have invested their own scarce money in order to return a bit of the profit from their commodities to themselves."

A move by bill opponents to refer the bill to the Agriculture Committee failed on a 14-10 vote. **HF2205's** next stop is the House floor.

— Betsy Gerboth



BONDING

Better ports

A bill to upgrade Minnesota's busiest ports received approval from the House Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Regulation Finance Committee Feb. 2.

The bill (**HF2507**), sponsored by Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul), authorizes over \$5 million in bonds to repair deteriorating dock walls, piers, and mooring cells, modernize dockside outlets, upgrade terminal structures and equipment, and make other necessary improvements.

According to Lorrie Louder of the St. Paul Port Authority, this will allow Minnesota ports to remain competitive in the market place and expand in response to economic demand.

Assistance would be available to the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth, and the Minneapolis, St. Paul, Red Wing, and Winona port authorities — the five ports that make up the Minnesota Ports Association.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will be in charge of administering the funds, so the individual ports will have to apply to MnDOT in order to obtain money for improvement projects.

According to Louder, the money requested will be used to address the most critical needs identified in a recent MnDOT survey which identified over \$32 million in potential projects needed by Minnesota ports.

The bill now moves to the House Capital Investment Committee.



BUDGET

Annual resolution

The House Ways and Means Committee approved a budget resolution Feb. 2 that calls for a maximum of \$15 million in new state appropriations this year.

That figure may seem low, especially when the state is sitting on a projected \$824 million budget surplus and Gov. Arne Carlson has submitted a budget calling for \$184 million in new spending and tax reductions.

"Our goal is to have considerably less in new spending than what the governor has proposed in his budget," said Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey), chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

What about that bulky surplus? Solberg argued that under current law only \$15 million of that \$824 million is actually available for new programs.

Of the remaining projected surplus funds, \$15 million is earmarked to boost the budget reserve created in 1995 to \$220 million in anticipation of cuts in federal dollars funneled to Minnesota, Solberg said.

Current law, according to Solberg, requires that \$794 million be used to pay back funds the state "shifted" from school districts. (Since 1982, the state has borrowed \$794 million from school districts through the property tax recognition shift.)

The current surplus in state coffers was generated through tax revenues that exceeded forecasts and savings in human services programs. Some surplus funds were appropriated for those services but will not be spent due to program cutbacks.

Carlson has proposed spending some of the surplus funds and saving the rest.

The governor wants to put \$160 million toward new projects including crime prevention, youth programs, and education reforms. Carlson also seeks to add to the budget reserve created in 1995 and to save about \$500 million in a special account.

But, Solberg said, any programs or savings schemes that require more than the \$15 million in available funds will have to use money "unappropriated" from elsewhere.



BUSINESS

Omnibus liquor bill

An omnibus liquor bill governing liquor licenses, wine tastings, and free beer samples has been approved by a House panel.

Sponsored by Rep. Jeff Bertram (DFL-Paynesville), **HF2590** was approved Feb. 7 by the Business Regulation Division of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee.

Among its provisions, the omnibus bill would:

- delete a state requirement that applicants for wholesaler or manufacturer liquor licenses must be United States citizens or resident aliens;
- allow Minnesota bed-and-breakfast facilities to give guests two complimentary glasses of wine per day, up to 4 ounces each, to drink on the premises. Bed-and-breakfast owners would not have to obtain an on-sale liquor license for such a purpose;
- amend state law governing on-sale liquor license fees. Under the amended law, the license fee would be intended to cover the cost of issuing the license, the cost of an annual inspection, and the costs of invest-

tigating violations of law at the liquor establishment;

- direct Minnesota's public safety commissioner to design a single 8"-by-12" notice that includes current state-mandated warnings concerning DWI and sales of liquor to underage patrons and make the sign available for copying by state liquor establishments. The sign would satisfy all legal requirements for signs posted in liquor establishments;
- provide that current law governing charitable wine tastings does not apply to wine tastings in bars where no charitable organization is involved, or where the proceeds are for a charity, but the tasting is primarily for educational purposes;
- allow liquor stores to give customers free samples of distilled spirits in containers up to 15 milliliters. Current law allows free samples of wine, beer, cordials, and liqueurs. The new law also would allow a brewer to furnish up to three cases of beer to off-sale retailers for samplings, which would be limited to five per year and a maximum of eight hours each, and three cases provided by the brewer for each sampling;
- allow off-sale stores to sell 50-milliliter bottles of distilled spirits;
- allow a retailer to bar anyone from bringing containers of alcohol into a licensed retail store. This portion of the bill was included after an incident in January in St. Paul when a man brought a bottle into a liquor store and drank it there. The store's proprietor discovered that state law didn't allow him to eject the man from the store; and
- allow tour boats on the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers to receive on-sale liquor licenses between May 1 and Oct. 31. Currently, only tour boats on Lake Superior are allowed to receive liquor licenses. The Commissioner of Public Safety also directs the public safety commissioner to give half of the \$1,000 license fee to the tour boat's home port city or county, if the boat is moored outside city limits.

The omnibus bill also would expand the number of liquor licenses allowed in West St. Paul, Thief River Falls, and Eagan.

The division re-referred **HF2590** to the full Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee.

Policing the contractors

Building contractors doing business in Minnesota would no longer be allowed to require subcontractors to sign construction lien waivers under legislation a House panel approved.

HF1041, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) would make it impossible under state law for a building contractor in another state to include a contract provision that Minnesota-based subcontractors are subject to the laws of that state.

The bill also would forbid contractors from requiring subcontractors and material providers to waive their right to a construction lien or to a claim against a payment bond before the subcontractor or provider has been paid.

Jennings told members that the intent of the bill is to protect subcontractors from a handful of unscrupulous contractors who delay paying them and sometimes declare bankruptcy before the bills are satisfied.

"We're talking about a couple of bad apples in a great big barrel of contractors," Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) told members of the Business Regulation Division of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee.

Gary Meier, who owns Meier Plumbing and Heating Co. in Winona, testified that his company did subcontracting work in 1994 for a firm that falsified documents and ended up filing bankruptcy. "Most general contractors are good, ethical, honest people," Meier said. "They work hard, they pay their bills, they care about their [subcontractors]. . . . But this company just plain lied to us, and it burns."

The division re-referred **HF1041** to the full House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee.



CHILDREN

Kids operating boats

The House passed a bill Feb. 5 that aims to improve safety on Minnesota lakes by keeping young children away from the controls of high-powered watercraft. The vote was 121-12.

Under the bill, children under 13 would be prohibited from operating personal watercraft, or Jet Ski-style machines, and children under 12 would be barred from operating motorboats of more than 75 horsepower.

The bill (**HF2834**), sponsored by Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby), also would pro-

hibit children under 12 from operating boats from 25 to 75 horsepower unless there is an adult within immediate reach of the controls. Those children would be allowed to operate boats of less than 25 horsepower without supervision.

The bill comes in response to a 1995 boating accident that claimed the life of 10-year-old Aaron Sahli of Ham Lake, Minn.

Aaron was riding on a pontoon boat on a Crow Wing County Lake last Memorial Day when the pontoon was struck by a 175-horsepower boat being driven by an 8-year-old boy.

The father of the 8-year-old was in the speedboat but was not at the controls.

Current law allows children under 12 to operate boats of less than 30 horsepower. They can operate more powerful boats as long as an adult is on board.

"We should have taken care of this sooner," Hasskamp said. "We should have anticipated with all the congestion on our lakes that something should be done, but we didn't."

The bill now goes to the Senate.

(See Feb. 2, 1996, *Session Weekly*, page 4)



CONSUMERS

Just like Mom makes

Grandma could sell her cupcakes at Rutabaga Days in Askov, Minn., without fear of being shut down by inspectors under a bill approved Feb. 5 by the House Agriculture Committee.

The bill (**HF2031**), sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), would allow certain foods, including bread, cookies, and other baked goods, to be sold under specific conditions by unlicensed vendors.

License fees of about \$130 can easily exceed the profits homemade food vendors earn at some community events, Ness said. And that knocks out small-town tradition.

"We need to preserve part of that culture and not overly regulate it," Ness said.

Under the bill, a person who prepares and sells food at farmers' markets or community events would not have to be licensed as long as the person takes in less than \$1,000 a year in gross receipts and sells his or her goods for no more than 10 days a year.

Also, the license exemption would apply only for events in towns of fewer than 15,000 people that are located outside the metro area. Vendors would be required to post signs reading "homemade and not inspected."



CRIME

Suing a public nuisance

A bill that would allow a property owner or neighborhood group to file a civil nuisance suit and seek monetary damages against a drug dealer, prostitute, john, or other individual, was approved by the House Judiciary Committee Feb. 5.

Under current law, only a prosecutor can file a nuisance action which usually involves trying to shut down a property or evict a tenant for violating two separate incidents in a 12-month period involving gambling, prostitution, or drug and firearms offenses outlined in law.

HF2204 proposes to open the door for citizens to sue, seek monetary damages, and combat "nuisance behavior" that is not necessarily tied to one specific building.

Under the bill, sponsored by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), to win a nuisance civil action it must be proven that the individual has two or more convictions within the previous 12 months for prostitution, illegal gambling, keeping a disorderly house, drug dealing, or another offense listed in the existing nuisance law. Or, "two or more separate behavioral incidents within the previous 12-months that would constitute a nuisance" under existing law must be proven.

If a suit is won, the court must permanently prohibit the perpetrator from continuing the activity and award actual damages or \$500, whichever is greater.

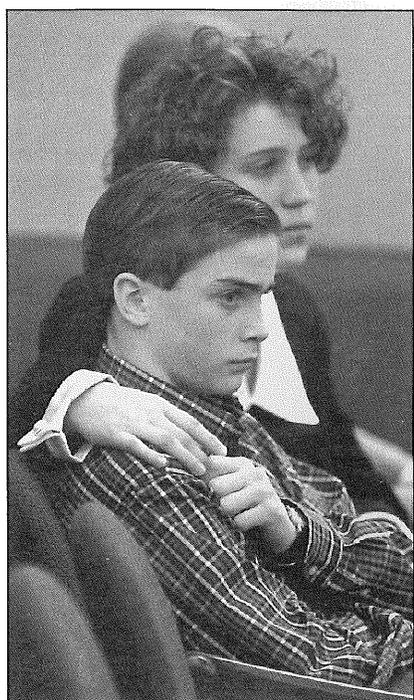
Dawkins explained that it may be difficult for property owners to prove the actual value of damages, such as a loss of their home's value due to crime in the neighborhood, so the bill would award damages of at least \$500.

In cases where a homeowner or neighborhood group wins, defendants would be forced to pay their attorneys fees. The bill, however, would not require the property owners to pay the attorneys fees of the defendant if he or she wins.

Although the bill still would allow prosecutors to file civil nuisance actions either on their own or at the request of a neighborhood, Dawkins said he doubts prosecutors would use the law much. Their budgets are too small and their caseloads too large, he said, adding the bill would likely be used only in the most egregious cases.

Lawmakers did debate whether to include prostitutes among those in the bill that could be sued for nuisance.

Kristin Berg of PRIDE, a group that helps



Nathan Burr, foreground, and his cousin Missy Jensen listened while Kevin Burr (Nathan's father) described to members of the House DWI Subcommittee an accident in which three of his relatives were killed. The truck driver responsible for the accident was charged with driving while under the influence of a controlled substance. A bill heard Feb. 5 would make it illegal to drive under the influence of any amount of a controlled substance.

prostitutes leave their life on the streets, called the bill regressive.

Prostitutes need "housing, drug treatment, and help raising their children — not a [civil suit] fine," she said.

Originally, an amendment to eliminate prostitutes from the bill succeeded. But after Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) made a motion to reconsider — arguing that neighborhoods needed protection from prostitutes as well — the amendment failed.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) argued in favor of the amendment stating that many prostitutes are victims of abuse and oppression themselves. Without the exclusion, he said, the bill would allow a property owner or neighborhood group to "revictimize a victim."

HF2204 now goes to the House floor.



DEVELOPMENT

Responsible land use

A watered-down version of Rep. Myron Orfield's (DFL-Mpls) controversial land use plan won approval from the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 7.

HF2231 is similar to bills Orfield has introduced in each of the past three sessions to establish a statewide comprehensive land use plan. Such a plan aims to manage urban sprawl in a way that imposes least upon the environment.

The current bill lacks any of the enforcement provisions that have drawn opposition in the past.

"This bill is an effort to move statewide land use planning ahead as slowly as possible," he said, referring to failed efforts in previous years. "I realize this is a tough political climate, that this is a sensitive issue with lots of rights and responsibilities involved and I wish to tread as lightly on those as we can. But I hope this year to move maybe a yard forward on this issue."

HF2231 asks Minnesota townships and counties with more than 2,500 people to establish comprehensive plans for the next 20 years. The counties and townships would be urged to work together on such plans and their work would be reviewed — but not approved — by the state Environmental Quality Board.

Orfield emphasized "we will not put a mandate on anybody without money for planning." Future committees will consider appropriating funds to help local governments develop land use plans.

Speaking of remote sewer lines and sprawling housing development, Orfield said Minnesota needs his bill.

"We've got a problem with growth that's

Feedback

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The editors

not very well planned for and it costs us a lot of money," he said, referring to remote and failing sewer lines and development in cities without sufficient roads. "This is a bill about saving money and about protecting farmland and ground water and the environment."

Chisago County homeowner and community activist Virginia Stark shared her concerns firsthand.

She said there are 138,000 acres of farmland in Chisago County, 83,000 of which are considered prime farmland. Under current zoning regulations, landowners can easily convert farmland to urban uses, she said.

"This is no plan at all. It's actively planned urban sprawl and it's planned for the permanent destruction of the natural resources of this wonderful city," Stark said. "This lack of a community plan means these lands full of natural resources, wildlife, biodiversity and farmland can be quickly destroyed and replaced with a subdivision."

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), an opponent of Orfield's past proposals, said a provision that urges maximum use of existing sewers and highways before constructing new ones would hurt his district and others that are located away from the metro region's main sewer line.

"This would affect my communities directly . . . and this would stop growth in my community. It would affect growth in Rep. Lindner's Dayton and the Maple Grove area, too," he said. "What I see here is a freeze on development."

Orfield said the 20-year plan allows communities to establish an "urban growth area" and then build what's necessary within that area, including sewer line extensions.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) said he agrees with Orfield's intent but disagrees with his approach. He suggested holding off on a statewide plan until the metro area solves its own growth problems. Ozment said the metro area, largely through the Metropolitan Council's guidance, has "legitimized urban sprawl."

"Once we get our act together maybe we can be a model to use for the rest of the state," Ozment said. "But the model [of development] we have right now I wouldn't wish on the rest of the state."

Under the bill, the Metropolitan Council would be involved in drafting community-based growth plans and would not allow "urban services" beyond a region's urban growth boundary.

Lee Ronning of the state's Land Stewardship Program said Minnesota is both the fastest-growing state in the upper Midwest and its 21-county growth corridor is the

fastest-growing metro region from the Northern Plains to the eastern seaboard. At the same time, at least 12 outstate counties are losing more people to natural death than they are gaining.

Add the fact that the state is losing 66 acres of farmland a day — or 24,000 a year — to urbanization, and Ronning said you've got a state with problems.

"Without a statewide coordinated plan, a lot of those 600,000-plus people expected over the years are going to go to fertile farm and corn fields," she said. "I think there's an opportunity here for Minnesota to really plan for this growth instead of just reacting to it so we can protect our natural resources and help to direct growth in places that need it instead of having it lopsided in one growth corridor."

The bill now goes to the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.



EDUCATION

Dealing with discipline

A House education panel is considering two bills that aim to improve discipline in the schools. One would make it easier to expel problem pupils and the other would encourage efforts to reduce the need for such action.

The K-12 Finance Division of the House Education Committee Feb. 7 discussed **HF2544**, sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), and **HF3033**, sponsored by Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park).

Both bills offer different, while not mutually exclusive, solutions to the same problem: Misbehaving students detract from teachers' ability to do their jobs and impede the learning experience of all students.

HF2544 would allow schools to expel students who violate sexual, religious, or racial harassment policies or other school conduct policies.

"I'm trying to send a different message to students, to parents, and to teachers that attendance is a privilege," Ness said. "I see this as empowerment for parents and teachers."

School districts would have to hold a hearing before a student could be expelled, unless the student's parents waived that right. A decision to expel could be appealed to the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

After a student is expelled, the pupil and parents would have 30 days to get the student admitted to another school — public or private. Failing that, the school district would

take over and find another school for the student.

Ness' bill has the support of school administration officials.

Roger Aronson, of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, said the measure would be a step in the right direction.

"We have a very cumbersome process that relates to expulsion now that's very, very expensive," Aronson said.

However, one provision in Ness' proposal sparked some controversy. If an expelled student enrolls in a private school, the school district would send the general education revenue for that student to his or her new school, under the bill.

Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka) called the provision of the bill "a more generous voucher proposal than the governor's."

But Ness said the measure would give private schools only a limited amount of public money in a limited number of cases.

"In no way do I intend this to be a voucher bill," he said.

While expulsion may be an answer to some school problems, Johnson, who chairs the K-12 panel, is pushing a plan to help schools address behavior problems before they get out of hand.

"I'll feel very comfortable and pleased when we no longer have any expulsions or suspensions," Johnson said.

HF3033 would set up a grant program for fiscal year 1997 to help schools implement constructive discipline policies. If approved, a yet-unspecified amount of grant funding would go to schools for programs focused on early intervention.

The bill would encourage schools to engage parents in a collaborative effort to alter inappropriate behavior and to see that such misbehavior does not become chronic.

It also would encourage schools to penalize students for misbehavior but to work to return them to their regular classrooms.

Grant recipients would be required to remove from regular classrooms students who violate the school's conduct code; to provide an alternative education site within the school for those students; and to make the alternative education constructive.

The K-12 Finance Division took no action on the bills, but the proposals may be considered for inclusion in the K-12 omnibus education bill.

Gang resistance

Currently, school districts can collect an extra \$1 in taxes per resident to help pay for school police officers and drug abuse prevention programs.

A bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee Feb. 5 would increase that amount to up to \$3 per district resident to help pay for programs that teach children how to resist gangs. The levy would remain optional for school districts.

HF2495, sponsored by Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul), recognizes that gang crime is increasing across the country and in Minnesota. Schools, he said, need to help reach students early, much like the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program has done.

DARE began in Minnesota schools in the late 1980s to help teach fifth- and sixth-graders about the dangers of drugs.

Under the bill, part of the increased levy would be used to help continue funding the DARE program and school police officers in middle and secondary schools.

Currently, about 220 Minnesota school districts levy up to \$1 per resident generating an estimated \$3.8 million for the 1996-1997 school year. Under the bill, an additional \$6.3 million could be raised if most of the districts levy the maximum \$3.

The bill now moves to the Education Committee.



ELECTIONS

Multiple-party candidates

A House panel approved a bill setting a framework for fusion candidates — those nominated by more than one political party — to be listed on the ballot.

But critics said the bill does not do enough to open the process to minor political parties.

The Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in January issued a decision that wiped out state election law forbidding fusion candidates on the ballot.

The court ruling came in the wake of events during the 1994 re-election campaign of Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul).

Dawkins accepted nominations from both the DFL and the Twin Cities Area New Party. He asked to be listed on the ballot as the nominee of both parties, but the Secretary of State refused, saying that state law did not allow it.

The New Party filed suit in the case, and state law barring fusion candidacies was sub-

sequently found to be unconstitutional.

HF3123, sponsored by Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona), would allow more than one nominating party to be listed under a candidate's name on the ballot.

The bill was approved Feb. 8 by the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee. It now moves to the Ways and Means Committee.

Under the bill, a candidate would be allowed to be listed as the nominee of one major party along with one or more minor parties or as the nominee of multiple minor parties.

A single candidate would not be allowed to be listed as the nominee of more than one major party. In Minnesota, there are three official major parties — Democratic-Farmer-Labor, Republican, and Independence.

The state chairperson of each nominating party would have to approve a fusion candidacy.

The bill has a sunset date of June 1, 1997.

Dawkins said the bill falls short of the standards established by the court.

Because it fails to provide a line on the ballot for voters to endorse a minor political party, the bill would leave an opening for further litigation, according to Dawkins.

He introduced a bill (**HF1141**) calling for the name of each political party to be listed in a separate area of the ballot to allow voters to indicate their support.

Votes for a specific party would have been used to determine if the organization had the necessary support (5 percent of the vote) to cross the threshold to major party status.

But Dawkins' bill was defeated Feb. 5 by the Elections Division of the General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee.



EMPLOYMENT

Time off for kids

A bill to allow parents to take a few hours of unpaid time off to attend their child's school play or parent-teacher conference — regardless of how long they've worked for a company — passed the House Feb. 8. The vote was 128-3.

Bill sponsor Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) used the words "common sense, apple pie, and motherhood" to describe her bill.

The proposal (**HF2682**) would expand current law which allows parents who have worked for a company for at least a year to take unpaid leave for a school activity.

Greiling told members of the Labor-Management Relations Committee Feb. 5 at least one company was strictly interpreting the law and denied an employee's request to attend her son's school lunch because the one-year requirement was not met.

Beth Ascher and Meredith Moreno, both employees of U.S. West and both representing the Communications Workers of America Local 7201 union, told panel members their employer has denied leaves for that reason.

Working parents, they said, face many barriers; they asked lawmakers to remove this one.

As in current law, the bill would allow parents up to 16 hours during a 12-month period to attend their child's school activities, provided the activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours.

The bill also keeps provisions in current law that in certain cases require an employee to "provide reasonable prior notice of the leave and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer."

Employers are not required to pay for the leave, but if the employee has accumulated vacation time or other paid time off, they may use it.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

Workers' comp changes

A bill that expands those covered by an employer's workers' compensation plan to certain independent contractors working in construction won approval from the House Labor-Management Relations Committee Feb. 5.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Robert Leighton (DFL-Austin) and Rep. Hilda Bettermann (R-Brandon), would set a general rule that some independent contractors working in construction are to be treated as employees by the companies that hire them to work.

That means that if an independent contractor working in construction is injured on the job, he or she would be covered by the company's workers' compensation plan.

HF2867 also could lead to less expensive workers' compensation insurance for some Minnesota businesses.

The bill would eliminate a cap on how much of a discount an employer can receive on their workers' compensation insurance premium. Current law sets the cap at 25 percent.

The proposal would allow insurance companies to offer, and employers to earn, an even higher discount rate. Currently, em-

ployers receive premium discounts and credits for a variety of reasons.

The bill also would allow more leeway in how much a base premium could go up or down in price depending on factors such as an employer's history with workers' compensation claims. The more claims against an employer, the higher their workers' compensation premium. Current law limits that shift up or down to 25 percent. The bill would eliminate the cap.

State law requires employers to purchase workers' compensation insurance which is used to help cover the costs of workers who are injured on the job.

The bill was set to be heard by the Governmental Operations Committee Feb. 8.



ENERGY

Cogeneration exemption

A bill exempting high-efficiency electric power generation plants from property taxes on equipment was approved by the House Taxes Committee Feb. 8.

HF637, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), aims to keep Koch Refining Co. from building its \$300 million cogeneration facility out of state. The company has said it wants to build the plant in Rosemount and has lobbied hard for the bill.

But the bill also could make Minnesota more attractive to other plants that utilize — or plan to use — cogeneration, which is a combustion process that uses heat more efficiently than does a conventional power plant.

On Feb. 1, when Koch officials first testified, they painted a picture of a state that's unattractive to electric generation companies. A Koch official said his company could build a \$300 million facility in Wisconsin and pay a fraction of the taxes Minnesota would require.

"We are entering a new generation of electric power as well as new competition for the electric power market," said Jim Johnson, project engineer. "Minnesota lags the nation in cogeneration electricity. . . you will probably not see any new plants under the current tax structure."

Critics, however, said the exemption alone won't jump start Minnesota's cogeneration market because companies weigh other factors, such as siting laws and labor supply. According to a Department of Revenue official, Koch will save about \$2.5 million with the exemption.

Opponents such as Northern States Power Co. and Minnesota Power said the law is "piecemeal" and unfair.

"We do not object to Koch building a cogeneration plant," said Warren Candy, vice president of Minnesota Power. "What we object to is a special subsidy given to one particular organization or one particular generator that will prevent Minnesota Power from competing on equal footing."

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) responded: "In other words you are saying the state should not look at which energy-generating delivery system is the cleanest or best for the environment but simply should look at what's best for the marketplace?"

In addition to being unfair, the bill isn't necessary because the marketplace is working, an NSP official said. NSP would lose a significant amount of Koch's substantial business if Koch builds the cogeneration plant.

"This is where efficiency is going in the market right now," said Audrey Zibelman, manager of energy resource planning. "These are the types of facilities that are going to be built in any case."

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) told Zibelman the fairness argument is irrelevant.

"It seems to me you can use cogeneration, you can be on equal footing and compete. What I hear today is NSP has no plan to build cogeneration plants in Minnesota, which is very troubling."

Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul) said it was ironic that NSP was protesting the tax exemption when they had no problems two years ago with a similar tax exemption for a Washington County cogenerator.

"What makes more sense to my constituents," Milbert asked Zibelman. "A cogenerator plant which is environmentally friendly or continuing with a coal-burning plant?"

An amendment by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) prohibits exempted plants from requiring nearby electric utilities to buy their power. The measure, aimed at preventing what Abrams dubbed "electron arbitrage," would deter speculators from jumping into the market to get the tax exemption.



ENVIRONMENT

Studying mutant frogs

Pictures of legless frogs and testimony from junior high students prompted members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee to approve \$78,000 Feb. 7 to study the mutant amphibians.

HF2594, sponsored by Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), appropriates \$50,000 to the Pollution Control Agency to study frog tissues and develop an index for wetlands

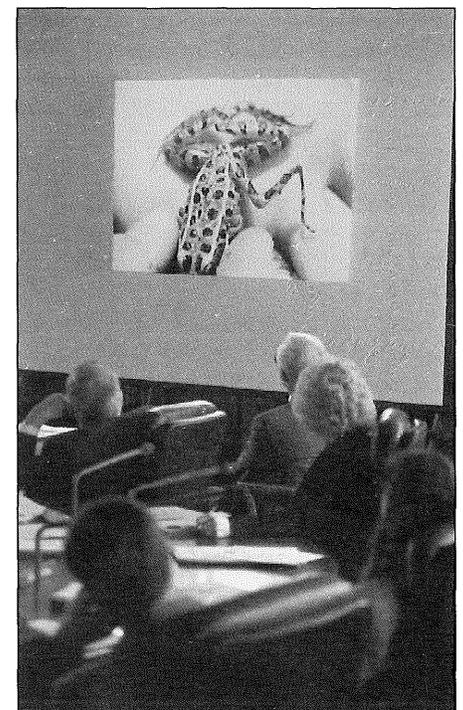
water quality that uses amphibians and invertebrates as indicators. An amendment by Rep. Virgil Johnson (R-Caledonia) added \$28,000 to Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education.

The bill was prompted by the discovery of deformed frogs in southern Minnesota last summer by some Le Sueur County students. The students, who attend the Minnesota New Country Charter School, initially consulted the Internet to find out what was wrong with the frogs. Their search eventually led to University of Minnesota researchers, the PCA, and the Legislature.

"The really interesting thing about this . . . is that the problem was discovered by kids," said Johnson, after hearing testimony from several children. "And these students, once they discovered it, went on the Internet . . . and accessed information from all over the world trying to figure out why these frogs had these deformities. . . I think it's a very, very important cause."

Dr. Judy Helgen, a research scientist with the PCA, said the frogs without feet and eyes are a sign of environmental problems.

"Frogs are ecological indicators because they integrate the environment . . . and can show us toxic agents in three different environments," she said, explaining how frogs



Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee watched slides of deformed frogs during a hearing Feb. 7. Students from the Minnesota New Country School in Le Sueur told the committee how they discovered the deformed frogs while on a field trip last summer near Henderson. The committee unanimously approved spending \$78,000 to fund a study scientists hope will provide an explanation.

hatch in wetlands, breed on land, and hibernate in rivers. "We now know since deformed frogs have appeared in several locations in central Minnesota that it's not just a problem of one isolated wetland."

Helgen said the PCA would use the study funds to locate the affected frog populations and look for patterns to determine the sources for the toxic agents.

The Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources has already appropriated \$123,000 to study the frogs. Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran) asked Munger if the full \$78,000 was needed, given the commission's appropriation.

"Do we need all of this money or would \$50,000 in your mind have taken care of this to begin with?" he said.

Munger said PCA and University officials assured him all the proposed funds were needed.

HF2594 was referred to the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Outbreak

A bill designed to help the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) more effectively contain the spread of harmful exotic species won approval from the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 2.

Under current law, transporting Eurasian Water Milfoil on a boat or trailer carries a \$100 fine. But last year, DNR officials didn't issue a single ticket. Why not?

Because there are other types of milfoil not covered by the law, including Northern Milfoil (which is indigenous to Minnesota) or Whorled Milfoil.

According to Jay Rendall, exotic species coordinator for the DNR, it's nearly impossible for even conservation officials to distinguish between types of milfoil. As a result, no citations were issued in 1995, making containment of the plant difficult and current law tough to enforce.

HF2379, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), would create a general description in law applying to all exotic species, defined as a wild animal or aquatic plant that can naturalize, and possibly threaten native species and natural resources. Examples are certain types of milfoil, Zebra Mussels, and Purple Loosestrife.

Approximately 80 bodies of water in Minnesota contain some type of harmful exotic species, including the Mississippi River south of the Twin Cities and Lake Minnetonka.

The bill also would prohibit (with limited exceptions) the transport of all aquatic plants,

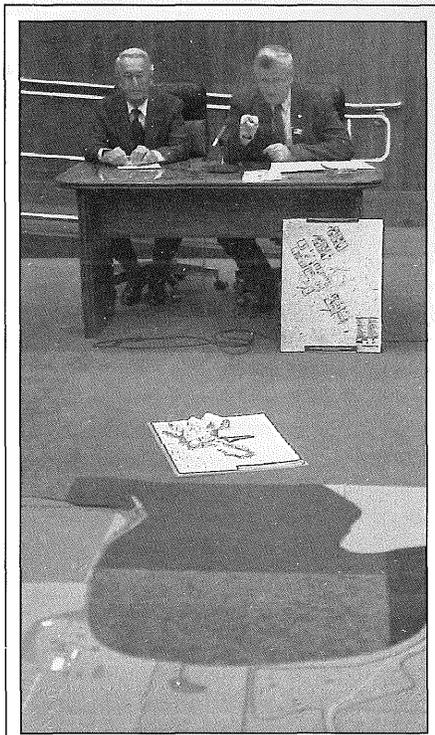
including transport on public highways, an area not covered by existing law. Violators would face the same fines under current law, and a new \$50 fine for transport on public highways.

Additionally, it would make the laws related to exotic species more "user friendly" by consolidating them into one chapter.

Some witnesses testifying at the hearing referred to the proposed bill as primarily behavior modification. Frank Schneider of the Minnesota Sport Fishing Commission said he doesn't like that transporting a plant native to Minnesota could mean he's breaking the law, but spoke in support of the bill.

Jennings said his intent isn't to expand the criminal side of the bill, just to clarify the intent of the current law.

The bill is now pending in the Governmental Operations Committee.



Project Leader Gordon Ekberg, right, points out one of the features of the Lawdale Environmental Learning Center that was laid out on the floor of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee Feb. 6. He was joined at the table by Lenard Blume, left, who asked the committee for money for the center.

New science centers

The House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee approved bonding requests totaling \$15.4 million at its Feb. 5 hearing.

The requests for science centers in Bemidji and Kandiyohi County, a park center in Lake Bronson State Park, and improvements to the Goodhue Pioneer Trail now go to the House Capital Investment Committee. There, the 1996 bonding bill will be assembled.

HF2678, sponsored by Rep. Bob Johnson (DFL-Bemidji), would authorize \$5.5 million in state bonds for the construction of the Bemidji Headwaters science museum center.

"There is no science center between Winnipeg and St. Paul . . . kids and parents in northern Minnesota have to travel hundreds of miles to visit one," said Lattie Elwell of the science center. "There is no source of informal education up there except for libraries."

The city of Bemidji has donated a \$1 million plot of land along the Mississippi River for the center, which would replace an existing downtown building that's rapidly aging, Elwell said. She told the committee the two-year-old center, which is not up to code, exists because of donations of time and money from contractors, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, and others. Some of the \$800,000 invested in the project to date was raised during a fundraiser by some cast members of the television show, "Northern Exposure."

Rep. Chuck Brown (DFL-Appleton), who chairs the committee, supported the project.

"If it's okay to build hockey rinks in this state as a matter of public policy maybe it's okay to build science museums," he said. "Maybe there ought to be some balance."

The committee also approved \$5 million in state bonds to build the Prairie Woods environmental learning center southeast of Lake Florida in northern Kandiyohi County (**HF2343**).

Rep. Tom Van Engen (R-Spicer) said his district is a prime spot for the center, which would focus on the interrelationship of agriculture and the environment. Northern Kandiyohi County is where the prairie, the woods, and the lakes meet, he said.

He also said the center would be within about two hours of every Minnesotan.

"There are waiting lists at every environmental center in the state," he said. "And many children aren't able to take advantage of the environmental learning that happens at those places."

HF2348, marking \$3.7 million in bonds, would go to the Goodhue Pioneer Trail.

The other bonding request approved by the committee was Rep. Jim Tunheim's (DFL-

Kennedy) **HF 2341**. That bill includes \$1.2 million in bonds for the construction of an interpretive center at Lake Bronson State Park.

Steam plant prohibited

A bill that could stop the University of Minnesota's controversial plan to refurbish a steam plant on the Mississippi riverfront won approval from the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 1.

HF 2351, sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), prohibits any state or local agency from issuing permits for projects that were subject to a 1994 environmental impact statement in the Mississippi River "critical area." That would keep the U of M from going through with its plan to renovate its coal-burning steam plant currently on the river. It could also create stronger barriers to any future industrial development along the Mississippi River in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Citing the environmental danger of coal-burning facilities and the existence of alternative energy-generating technologies, the bill states that other sites should be used. It also establishes the goal of returning Mississippi riverfront lands in Minneapolis and St. Paul to scenic or recreational uses, such as Boom Island Park and St. Anthony Main, among others.

The bill faced opposition from U of M officials. The U of M has maintained their plan to shut down one of two facilities and refurbish the other will decrease the level of emissions currently released into the environment.

Both critics and supporters agree the U of M plan would not harm the environment more than do the mercury and other emissions from the two existing steam plants. A study by the Environmental Quality Board released Jan. 31 showed that alternatives to the U of M's plan — which are favored by Kahn and other critics — would not be significantly better for the environment than the university plan. Several skeptical committee members requested the board to share materials and information used to reach that conclusion. The board did say alternatives, such as a gas oil plant located away from the river, would release less mercury into the environment, but that the amount was too negligible to have a significant improved effect.

HF2351 now goes to the House floor.
(See Feb. 2, 1996, *Session Weekly*, page 10)



GOVERNMENT

Celebrating emancipation

June 19, the date officially celebrated in other areas of the nation as Juneteenth, will become a day of recognition in Minnesota under a bill passed by the House.

The full House unanimously approved **HF1889**, sponsored by Rep. Richard Jefferson (DFL-Mpls), on Feb. 7.

Juneteenth is observed as the day the Emancipation Proclamation was first publicly read in Texas in 1865. Although historians have never been able to determine the exact date that year when the proclamation abolishing slavery was read, they believe it was sometime between June 13 and 19.

Jefferson said that because the Civil War was going on when President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, it took another two years and the end of the war before every state acknowledged it. "The plantation owners were fearful that if they made it known, the slaves would leave," he said.

Juneteenth will be observed in Minnesota on June 19. As a state day of recognition, it will be similar to Arbor Day and Ethnic American Day, which are not celebrated as official state holidays.

The bill now goes to the Senate.



HEALTH

Expanding MinnesotaCare

Minnesota adults who earn up to one-and-a-half times the federal poverty level would be eligible for MinnesotaCare, the state's program to provide subsidized health coverage to uninsured residents, under a bill approved Feb. 8 by a House panel.

HF2312, sponsored by Rep. Roger Cooper (DFL-Bird Island), provides that individual adults and households without children that earn up to 150 percent of the federal level would become eligible to participate in MinnesotaCare beginning July 1.

Currently, single adults and households without children that earn up to 125 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for MinnesotaCare.

Under the current federal poverty level, that means that a single adult earning \$11,205 or less, and a household without children earning \$15,045 or less, would be allowed to participate in the plan.

The current limits for single adults and

households without children, respectively, are \$9,338 and \$12,538.

"The bottom line is that the dollars exist to do this," said Cooper, chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee's MinnesotaCare Finance Division. "... It keeps us keeping our promise to do the level best we can to provide the working poor with [health] insurance."

"One hundred and fifty percent is a conservative move forward," Jim Koppel of the Children's Defense Fund, which also supports the move, told lawmakers.

According to the Minnesota Health Care Commission, there are 4,100 fewer Minnesota families enrolled in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) because of MinnesotaCare. That translates to a combined net savings to the state and federal governments of more than \$24 million annually, according to the commission.

George Hoffman of the state's Department of Human Services agreed that the AFDC savings is directly attributable to MinnesotaCare, although he admitted being skeptical initially.

Lawmakers opposed amendments to **HF2312** offered by Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) and Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin).

Bradley's amendment would have set limits on the total assets of MinnesotaCare participants. Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul), in particular, took exception to the proposal, saying asset limits would unfairly shut out many Minnesotans: "I'm concerned that we make this too black and white and don't allow for shades of gray," she said.

Haas' amendment, which also was defeated, would have lowered the provider tax paid by hospitals, surgical centers, pharmacies, wholesale drug distributors, and other health care providers who participate in the MinnesotaCare program from 2 percent to 1.25 percent.

HF2312 now goes to full Health and Human Services Committee.



HOUSING

Property improvements

The House Housing Committee approved several bills Feb. 5 that aim to encourage the construction and upkeep of low-income housing.

HF2943, which now moves to the House Taxes Committee, would prohibit for five years increases in the assessed value of some metro-area properties after improvements are made to them. Since property taxes are based on a property's assessed value, owners

wouldn't see their tax bill go up should they improve their property. Rep. Edwina Garcia (DFL-Richfield) said she's sponsoring the bill to prompt renovations to aging housing which is often forgotten.

To qualify, the improved property has to be residential, located in the seven-county metro area, contain four or more units, and be at least 30 years old. The building also must be in a community which has exceeded the rental housing affordability index, defined by the Metropolitan Council as rents of more than 80 percent of median income. The improvements must also total at least \$5,000.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) said she feared the tax exemption would burden adjacent taxpayers. Supporters said that wouldn't happen because the exemption applies only to renovations. Property would be taxed at its pre-renovation value for up to five years under the bill and school levies raised over the period would be paid.

The committee also approved Rep. Andy Dawkins' (DFL-St. Paul) **HF2909**, which calls for a constitutional amendment to allow the use of state bonds to build or rehabilitate housing in the state. The amendment, which voters would see on the November 1996 ballot, seeks to give those who rehabilitate houses the same benefits as farmers get through the Rural Finance Authority Loan Program. Under that 73-year-old program, state bonds are used to give farmers discounted loans.

"This proposal says let's look at that in terms of housing. Perhaps there's an opportunity we can take advantage of," said Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), who is co-sponsoring the bill with Majority Leader Phil Caruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center). "With the cutbacks at the federal level [in housing-related services] we need all the tools we can get."

Reps. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington), Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), and Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) had reservations about the bill. McElroy and Harder said they wanted a clearer understanding of who would administer the program. Under the Rural Finance Authority Loan Program, local lenders assume the risk for the loans.

Seagren said the amendment should contain a strict definition of who could qualify for state bonds.

"We ought to explain that before we get into something we might not want to get into," she said.

HF2909 was referred to the House Capital Investment Committee.

The committee also approved Rep. Darlene Luther's (DFL-Brooklyn Park) **HF2663**

by a narrow margin. The bill creates a tax increment financing (TIF) district in Brooklyn Park aimed at reviving six distressed communities along Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard.

The communities have lost more than \$11 million in property revenues over the last five years, Luther said.

"My area alone lost 45 percent of its value," she said. "And yet the cost of providing safety and other services continues to climb."

McElroy, one of six dissenters on a 7-6 vote, said nearby property owners would feel the bill's pinch.

"When you freeze tax assessments, it has the potential to increase school levies in the long run," he said. "So it does cost money."

A Brooklyn Park city official countered that without a TIF district, the state will have to make up for lost property values eventually.

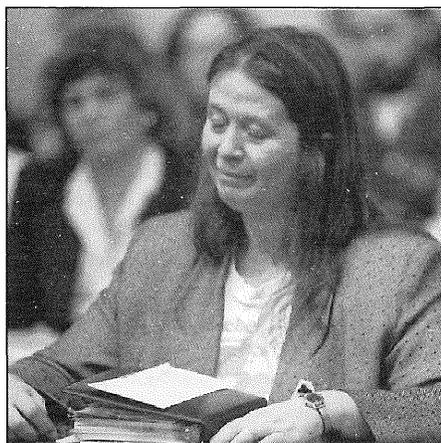
He also noted Brooklyn Park's two other TIF districts will be decertified this year, ahead of schedule.

HF2663 was referred to the House Taxes Committee.

Emergency shelter dollars

On the same day crowds converged on the State Capitol to rally for affordable housing, the House Housing Committee approved a bill that would increase statewide funding for emergency shelters and transitional housing.

HF2690, sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), appropriates an unspecified amount of money in grants for the state emergency shelter program. (The program received \$4.5 million for shelters and transi-



Bobbi Butler, an advocate for Elim Transitional Housing, Inc., became emotional when she recounted how at one time she had been homeless. She testified before the Housing Committee Feb. 6 in support of a bill that would set aside state money to supplement a federal emergency shelter program.

tional housing in 1995.) The bill seeks operational funds that one housing official who testified hopes will be an additional \$6 million.

"As you know we are experiencing some pretty big cuts at the federal level," Clark told the committee. "One of our main concerns is shelters."

The bill would help people who are homeless, about to be homeless, or those getting out of homelessness through transitional housing.

Bobbi Butler, a former homeless mother, told the committee funding for transitional housing could make a life or death difference for someone.

In emotional testimony, the former construction worker described her unexpected descent into homelessness and emergency shelters. It nearly ended with her killing herself and her children, she said.

"I was under the impression things like this just didn't happen," she said. "But with the help of transitional housing... I've moved on to become a homeowner."

Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran) suggested federal cuts in housing programs aren't going to be as big as initially thought.

"Republicans are telling us there's going to be more money this year and next year... it seems like this problem is being taken care of," Lindner said, referring to new budget negotiations in Washington. "What we don't need is another program costing Minnesota taxpayers \$10.5 million."

Clark said whatever's going on in Washington doesn't free Minnesota from responsibility.

"It's our problem in Minnesota no matter what the federal government does. If you and I would walk out the door today and look at all the homeless people in Minnesota, do you know how many people we would see?" Clark asked Lindner. "We're not asking for something extra, for icing on the cake here. This is really necessary." Clark estimated there are about 5,000 homeless people on Minnesota streets and in shelters.

Clark emphasized the need to pass the bill in order to "send a bipartisan message to the Legislature that housing is a really important issue."

The bill was referred to the Economic Development, Infrastructure and Regulation Finance Committee.



HUMAN SERVICES

Welfare reform

A bill to require both caregivers in certain two-parent households on welfare to work was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 6.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bob Anderson (DFL-Ottertail), also includes a residency requirement to receive certain welfare benefits.

Specifically, most individuals would have to reside in Minnesota for 30 days before they could receive Medical Assistance, General Assistance, or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

HF2609 doesn't have a fiscal note yet but does include \$15 million to subsidize child care costs for more low- and moderate-income families, thus removing a barrier to their returning to work.

The bill states that the Department of Human Services may, to the extent child care funding is available, require both caregivers in a two-parent household to work if they are receiving AFDC and their children are age 6 or older and not in kindergarten.

In all, this provision is expected to affect about 800 families in Minnesota, according to the Department of Human Services.

Assistant Commissioner Deborah Huskins told lawmakers the provision is necessary to meet federal guidelines. Last year, she said, the federal government warned the state of a maximum \$5 million sanction because not enough two-parent welfare families were working.

Currently, the federal government, which funds the AFDC program jointly with the state, requires 60 percent of two-parent welfare families to work. To date, Huskins said, Minnesota has 37 percent or 1,231 families.

In 1997, the federal requirement jumps to 75 percent, so the state needs to do something to ensure that it can meet that target.

Huskins said the provision would trigger a need for more child care with both caregivers working. To help, the department is asking for \$450,000 in a supplemental budget bill specifically to pay for two-working-parent child care grants.

In addition, the bill would require two-parent families in the Minnesota Family Investment Plan (MFIP) welfare program to find work after receiving assistance for six months. This, too, would apply only to caregivers whose children are age 6 or older and not in kindergarten.

MFIP is a six-year-old program operating in several counties. It allows families to ac-

cept lower paying jobs while receiving some public assistance. This helps them gain work experience.

Another provision in **HF2609** would allow counties the option of starting up a new jobs program for AFDC recipients called MNJOBS. Along with state agencies, the county would work with local public and private employers and work force councils to operate the employment program.

In counties that choose to use the program, AFDC recipients would be required to participate or face sanctions, such as the loss of their public assistance benefits.

Welfare recipients would complete a face-to-face orientation on the program within 10 days and be advised of their need to work. Benefits such as Medical Assistance, help with child care costs, and transportation to and from a job would be provided.

Those on AFDC would be required to begin searching for a job within 30 days of the MNJOBS orientation and job hunt for at least 30 hours a week for up to four weeks. Individuals who are working at least 20 hours a week would only have to conduct a job search for 12 hours a week for eight weeks.

AFDC recipients who can't find private or non-government funded employment within 24 months would be referred to a government-subsidized, public jobs program.

HF2609 is awaiting a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Short-lived apology

A bill offering a public apology to mentally handicapped people whom the state involuntarily committed to state institutions was withdrawn by its author after a House panel deleted what she considered to be important language.

"If we're not going to be totally honest in our apology, there's no point in going forward," Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) told the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 8.

The more than two-page resolution contained in **HF2446** originally stated in part that:

"Whereas, since the founding of the Faribault Regional Treatment Center in 1879, tens of thousands of Minnesotans with developmental disabilities (primarily mental retardation) have been removed from Minnesota communities and committed to live in state institutions where many of these Minnesotans have died and been buried in unmarked graves or graves that bore only a number; and . . . were forced to labor without

compensation . . ." and "were subjected to medical experiments and procedures without their consent. . . . Be it resolved that the state of Minnesota makes a public apology . . ."

A successful amendment by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) deleted the language dealing with graves.

"I think this is a hidden agenda to fund labeling these graves," said Boudreau, who was originally a co-sponsor of the bill but requested her name be taken off.

"At first glance I was sympathetic," she said adding that she now questions if the state should apologize for using medical technology and methods thought to be appropriate at the time.

She said she suspected the bill was the first step before family members or others ask the state for money to place marked tombstones on all the unmarked or numbered graves sitting on the campuses of regional treatment centers across the state.

McCollum, who said she knows of no hidden purpose to the bill, explained that some family members already have raised private donations to place tombstones at grave sites. She added she was willing to delay a vote on her bill until the Office of the Attorney General could release an opinion on whether the bill would open up the state to any liability to pay for tombstones.

McCollum explained that she believed an apology was just the right thing to do. The apology is meant to say "we have learned."

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) said that as written she couldn't support the bill, not because she didn't feel the state should apologize but because the bill was too negative. She said it needed to say something positive about how treatment centers have improved dramatically over the decades and how dedicated staff members are to their patients.

McCollum said the bill in no way is talking about how Minnesota operates today.

Rep. Tony Onnen (R-Cokato), a co-sponsor of the bill, said: "I don't have a problem saying I'm sorry."

Earlier he offered a successful amendment to eliminate the name of the Faribault Regional Treatment Center from the bill, noting that no particular institution should be named while others are not.

He said the state should not be so proud as to not apologize. The bill only attempts to say "we learned from history."



INSURANCE

Job protection

Insurance agents Gary Kemp and Mary McClure claim they were trying to do the right thing when they backed legislation crafted to protect insurance consumers. It cost them their jobs.

Both long-time agents for American Family Insurance, Kemp of West St. Paul, and McClure of Mankato, became active in an effort to pass a legislative proposal that the company opposed.

The agents backed a measure to bar insurance companies from requiring agents to meet quotas on the sale of certain types or mixes of policies. The 1995 Legislature passed a law freeing independent agents from such quotas.

Kemp and McClure were pushing for lawmakers to extend the quota ban to cover agents who sell policies directly for companies such as American Family and State Farm.

Proponents of such measures argue quotas can put unreasonable demands on insurance agents and can be detrimental to the service consumers receive.

American Family said that Kemp and McClure engaged in "conduct prejudicial to the company." On Jan. 11, 1996, the agents were abruptly fired.

Kemp and McClure claim their First Amendment rights to free speech have been violated.

"We can't believe that what we worked so hard for was taken away because we were advocates for insurance consumers," McClure said in Feb. 7 testimony to the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

The committee approved a bill (HF3052), sponsored by Rep. Don Ostrom (DFL-St. Peter), that aims to prevent such firings in the future.

Under current state law, insurance companies are prohibited from firing agents who contact a state agency or department about a problem.

Ostrom's bill would simply make it clear that the law protects agents who contact anyone in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches.

"If we fail to reaffirm this [right], it will have a chilling effect on the public," Ostrom said.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

Mandatory coverage

Bills mandating that health insurers cover treatment expenses for one malady and testing for another were approved Feb. 7 by the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

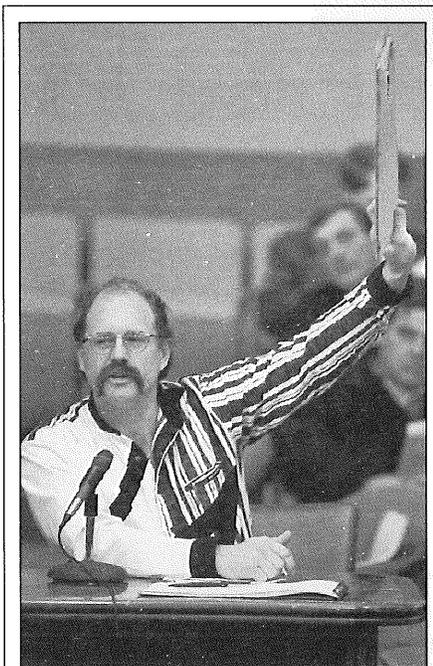
The bills would require insurers to cover screening to detect prostate cancer and treatment for Lyme disease.

HF2394, sponsored by Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), would require insurance companies, under certain conditions, to pay for a blood test used to detect prostate cancer.

Insurers would have to cover the prostate specific antigen (or PSA) test for all men older than 50 and for men older than 40 who suffer symptoms of the disease or are in a high-risk group.

The test is already covered by all but a few health insurance companies. Tomassoni argued that it is too important to be denied to any policyholder.

HF219, sponsored by Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown), would require insurance companies to pay for treatment for diagnosed cases of Lyme disease.



"Cowboy" Dave Ronning, director of "Gang of Good People," a group of concerned citizens from the Phillips Neighborhood in Minneapolis, held up a piece of 3/8-inch-thick plywood that had been torn off a boarded up building. He illustrated to members of the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee Feb. 6 that current measures taken to secure vacant buildings are inadequate. He supports a bill that would require cities to notify mortgage holders and neighborhood associations of their need to board up vacant buildings.

The disease — a bacterial illness transmitted by the bite of an infected deer tick — affects the skin, joints, and other parts of the body. It can have serious results including chronic arthritis and neurological impairment.

But some insurers won't pay for adequate antibiotic treatment for the disease, said Murphy. (See Feb. 2, 1996, *Session Weekly*, page 14)

The bills now move to the House floor.

Protected from discrimination

Victims of domestic abuse would be protected from discrimination by insurance companies under a bill approved Feb. 7 by the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

HF2344, sponsored by Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls), would prohibit insurance companies from using domestic abuse as a negative underwriting factor for life or health insurance.

Such discrimination is occurring, Long said, and that sends the wrong message to abuse victims.

In most circles, abuse victims are encouraged to speak out and to seek help. Insurance companies, however, are sending a message that abuse victims should stay silent or face consideration as a high risk and denial of coverage.

The bill now moves to the House floor.



LABOR

Higher minimum wage

Minnesota's minimum wage would be increased to \$5.50 under a scaled-back bill on the way to the House floor.

SF302, sponsored in the House by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), passed the House Ways and Means Committee on Feb. 2, but only after it was altered to call for a more modest hike than initially proposed.

"We have to be realists," said Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters), who backed the successful effort to install a smaller hourly wage increase in the bill.

To bid for a larger increase, he added, would be asking for "a little bit too much, too fast."

The bill that emerged in January from the Labor-Management Relations Committee called for the hourly minimum wage to increase \$2.75 over the next two years, peaking at \$7 per hour.

The current proposal would increase the \$4.25 minimum wage for large businesses to \$5 an hour in July 1996 and to \$5.50 an hour in July 1997.

Small businesses also would see an increase in the \$4 hourly minimum they are currently required to pay.

For employers with gross annual sales under \$500,000, the minimum wage would jump to \$4.75 an hour in July 1996 and to \$5.25 in July 1997.

Beginning in 1999, the minimum wage for both large and small businesses would be adjusted every two years according to any change in the average personal income of Minnesotans.

The Ways and Means Committee, which approved the bill on a 10-6 vote, also scrapped provisions in the original proposal that would have allowed employers to pay lower wages in exchange for providing benefits.

Rukavina said changes made by the committee should make his bill more palatable to lawmakers on both sides of the aisle and could help avert a gubernatorial veto.

Gov. Arne Carlson vetoed a 75-cent minimum wage increase in 1994. It is unclear if he would accept any such measure this year.

Minnesota last increased the minimum wage in 1991, when it was bumped from \$3.95 an hour to \$4.25.

In 1995, Rukavina sponsored a bill that would have increased the hourly minimum by a dollar over a two-year period. That measure passed out of committee but never came up for a vote on the House floor.

(See Jan. 26, 1996, *Session Weekly*, page 6)



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Attracting, keeping top talent

The salaries of school district superintendents and local government officials could exceed existing limits under a bill approved Feb. 6 by a House panel.

HF 2808 would allow school districts and local governments to compete for the best talent and would more accurately reflect the intent of the law, said bill sponsor Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls).

Minnesota's superintendent salary cap of \$108,780, or 95 percent of the governor's annual pay, has been criticized by districts that say they can't attract or retain top talent. A state school board official told the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee that Anoka schools lost a strong superintendent last year because he got a higher salary in Texas, where there is no salary cap.

Under the bill, the salaries of superintendents and local government officials would be set in relation to the governor's total compensation package — not just annual salary. (A percentage will probably be established when the bill is heard in the Governmental Operations Committee and legislators review the governor's total compensation package, which is yet undetermined.)

Rep. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins) amended the bill to allow school districts and local governments to exceed the new cap if measurable performance criteria is established and the employee agrees to a pay cut or contract termination if the criteria isn't met.

Kelley said the amendment added more options for local governments and school districts.

"Over time we're going to be unable to predict what the market will do to some of these salaries," said Kelley. "I think we need to offer government entities more flexibility provided we have more accountability."

HF2808 was one of three bills the committee heard over two days on the subject. **HF2162** sponsored by Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), would have slashed the maximum salaries of local government employees to \$74,582, or 95 percent of the commissioner of the Department of Finance's annual pay.

HF2081, sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), originally lifted just the superintendent's cap but was broadened to include government officials as well.

After much debate, committee members decided to vote on Long's bill. Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) said **HF2808** made the most sense.

"This is a problem . . . for too long we've been playing the game of the governor's salary," he said, adding that Long's bill "most honestly addresses that problem."

HF2808 now moves to the House Governmental Operations Committee.



SPORTS

Women only

A Twin Cities-based running club for women would be allowed to exclude men from an annual running event under a bill that narrowly passed the House Feb. 5. The vote was 68-65.

HF2042, sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), would amend the state's Human Rights Act to allow single-gender athletic teams or clubs to restrict membership to members of one sex "whose overall athletic opportunities have previously been limited."

The legislation arose out of a conflict last year when a man filed a discrimination complaint against the Northern Lights Running Club for Women. The club wouldn't allow him to participate in its annual "Bruegger's Run for the Bagels," an event that includes a 10-kilometer and 5-kilometer race as well as running events for young girls. The spring event has attracted more than 3,000 runners in recent years.

When the man's complaint was dismissed, he filed a civil lawsuit against Bruegger's, the Minneapolis Park Board, and the running club, alleging sexual discrimination. Rather than dealing with the "logistical nightmare" of such a changed format and the "philosophical changes" that the club might have had to adopt, club members canceled the race for 1996.

Kahn's bill would become effective in time for an all-women's race to be scheduled this year.

Kahn argued that the bill was important not only to recognize that women have been discriminated against for centuries, but to recognize that many women don't have the muscle mass or speed of men. If men were allowed in the race, they'd consistently win, she said.

Not everyone agreed.

"This is a bad bill," said Rep. Teresa Lynch (R-Andover). "I don't think it is right to discriminate against people because we've been discriminated against in the past."

She said she supports separate male and female running teams participating in the same race.

In a letter, Sue Wurl, president of Northern Lights Running Club, stated: "In the twenty some years women have been allowed to compete in races, we have come a long way, but we have a lot of untapped potential that requires special venues to continue to grow."

She also stated: "While perhaps discriminatory, exclusive events such as our race offer a unique celebratory atmosphere, are developmental and motivational in nature, and offer modeling for younger athletes that cannot be matched by any other event in the state."

HF2042 now heads to the Senate.



TAXES

Super-majority required

An effort to raise Minnesota taxes would require a two-thirds majority vote of the Legislature or a local governing unit under a bill narrowly approved by a House panel.

HF2548, sponsored by Rep. Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth), was approved Feb. 7 on a party-line vote by the House Taxes Committee's Sales and Income Tax Division.

Lawmakers voted 6-5 to place the question on the ballot in the Nov. 5 general election. Because the bill would amend the Minnesota Constitution, it requires approval by voters.

"This idea is not new," Van Dellen told members of the panel. "Twenty-three states have some sort of tax limitation in their constitutions or statutes. . . . There is much precedent for super-majority votes for weighty decisions."

He said he chose to make the requirement part of Minnesota's Constitution because he wanted something "permanent and enforceable."

Under **HF2548**, any proposal to increase any tax in Minnesota would fail unless it received the approval of a so-called "super majority," or two-thirds of the Legislature, or two-thirds of a local governing body such as a city council or school board.

Alternatively, a simple majority of Minnesota voters in a referendum could approve a tax increase. The proposed amendment would authorize the Legislature to submit legislation that proposed tax increases to a binding referendum vote.

Under Minnesota case law, the Legislature now is forbidden to make legislation contingent upon voter approval.

State lawmakers currently must have a two-thirds super majority to:

- expel members from the Legislature;
- suspend the requirement to have legislative bills read on the House floor three separate times;
- override gubernatorial vetoes; and
- change general banking laws.

In addition, all bonding bills that come before the Legislature require a three-fifths super majority for passage.

Van Dellen's bill was opposed by all DFL members of the Sales and Income Tax Division.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) expressed concern about the difficulty of raising the state's gas tax under such a system, to the detriment of the state's infrastructure.

"Certainly we have to approach our infrastructure needs rationally," Van Dellen said.

"There's nothing in this bill that would preclude an increase in the gas tax; people either ought to have the right to vote on it, or we ought to be sure of it before we pass it."

HF2548 now goes before the full House Taxes Committee.

Philanthropic tax credits

Minnesota corporations that contribute money to neighborhood assistance programs would be eligible for income tax credits under a bill considered Feb. 7 by a House panel.

HF2766, sponsored by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), would allow a company to claim an income tax credit equal to 50 percent of such contributions.

Under current law governing corporate income tax, a contribution deduction is limited to 15 percent of taxable net income. Unused contribution deductions cannot be carried forward from year to year.

HF2766 would allow a corporation to claim a maximum of \$250,000 in credits every year. The credit would be non-refundable, and if the credit exceeded the tax due in a year, that credit could be carried forward up to five years.

Contributions to a neighborhood assistance program would be eligible for the credit if a neighborhood organization received a certificate from the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development to operate such a program.

To receive such a certificate, a neighborhood organization must provide community services — defined as counseling and advice, emergency assistance, medical care, recreational facilities, housing facilities, employment placement, job training, or economic development assistance — in an economically disadvantaged area.

An economically disadvantaged area is defined in Minnesota law as an enterprise zone or an area that is certified as economically disadvantaged by the Department of Trade and Economic Development and the Department of Human Services.

"This opens up a whole new channel of funding opportunities for the nonprofit community," Mike Brinda, who works with nonprofit groups, told lawmakers. "It's immediate, it's direct, and it's very accountable."

The Minnesota Department of Revenue estimates that **HF2766** would reduce general fund corporate franchise tax revenue by \$5 million in the 1998-99 biennium. If approved, the law would go into effect Jan. 1, 1997.

The bill was approved by the House Taxes Committee's Sales and Income Tax Division

and will be considered as part of the omnibus tax bill.



TRANSPORTATION

Gas tax increase

A bill calling for a 5-cent hike in the state gas tax and for a constitutional amendment to devote some revenue to public transit was narrowly approved Feb. 2 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

HF2070, sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), aims to increase the gas tax by 3 cents per gallon in June 1996 and by 2 cents per gallon in January 1997. After that, the gas tax would be adjusted annually depending on the rate of inflation.

But the increases would hinge on voter approval of a proposed constitutional amendment to devote to public transit an unspecified portion of motor vehicle sales tax revenues. (The proposed amendment would appear on the November 1996 ballot.)

The bill, approved on an 11-10 vote, offers a reasonable way to resolve a long-running debate over the gas tax, according to Lieder.

The nickel increase would provide funds for bridge and highway repair, Lieder said, and a voter-approved constitutional amendment would create a much-needed funding source for transit.

Minnesota hasn't increased its gas tax since 1988, when it hit the current 20-cents per gallon mark. But talk of raising the tax by a nickel is nothing new at the State Capitol. Proposals to do so failed in 1993, 1994, and 1995.

Under the Minnesota Constitution, proceeds from the state's gas tax are earmarked for roads and bridges. Money for transit must come from some other source, such as the state's general fund.

The general perception is that money for transit is more beneficial to the metropolitan area and money for highways is better for rural Minnesota.

Lieder and other supporters of the bill argued that it strikes a balance between rural and metropolitan interests.

"It's as close to closing that debate as I've seen in a long, long time," said Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters).

But others on the committee were not convinced.

"This is simply not going to be acceptable," said Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Newport).

Voter approval of the proposed constitutional amendment would create a hole in the general fund by diverting some of the revenue from the sales tax on motor vehicles.

Because of that, it's doubtful the gas-tax bill will survive the Legislature and be signed by the governor, according to Marko.

She tried to amend the bill to instead propose a constitutional amendment to allow gas-tax revenue (along with motor vehicle license tax funds) to be used for highway and bridge repair and for transit.

Marko's proposed amendment drew much debate but ultimately failed on a 17-4 vote.

Clearly, the devil is in the details when it comes to the gas tax debate. There seems to be wide agreement that more money is needed to repair roads and bridges and construct new ones.

In fiscal year 1995, the state received \$546 million from the gas tax. According to estimates, each increase of a penny per gallon generates \$25 million more a year.

Many also agree more money also is needed to expand and upgrade mass transit systems such as metropolitan and regional public bus lines. (See Jan. 26, 1996, *Session Weekly*, page 3)

Transit and Minnesota's highways and bridges would face an uncertain future if the Legislature fails to act this year, according to Lieder.

"The highways can go on for a year or two, but definitely, transit is not going to have a source for funding," he said.

HF2070 now goes to the Taxes Committee.



Minnesota's open bottle law was established in what year?

It was in 1959 that the open bottle law was passed in Minnesota. The law prohibits driving a vehicle with a bottle (or can) of an alcoholic beverage unless the liquor is in the trunk or in another area of the car "not normally occupied by passengers" if the car doesn't have a trunk. Violations of the law are a misdemeanor. Courts have determined that even if the driver hasn't consumed anything from the bottle, possession of, or proximity to, an open bottle is still a violation.



Three area attractions no longer would be required to charge each visitor an extra 25 cents for admission under a bill considered Feb. 7 by a House panel. **HF2403**, sponsored by Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), would repeal the so-called Scott County admissions tax, which was authorized in 1987 to help pay for construction of the Bloomington Ferry Bridge. The 25-cents-per-ticket tax was levied on amusement facilities with capacities of at least 10,000 that had at least 10,000 patrons a year. In Scott County, which includes Shakopee, the tax applied to Valleyfair, Canterbury Downs, and the Minnesota Renaissance Festival. The Bloomington Ferry Bridge was completed late last year. Kelso told members of the House Taxes Committee's Sales and Income Tax Division that she wouldn't speculate on whether the three attractions will lower their admission prices with the repeal of the tax. **HF2403** will be considered as part of the omnibus tax bill.

Descendants of people buried in Minnesota cemeteries no longer would have to pay sales tax on "perpetual care" gardening services for graves under two bills considered Feb. 7 by the House Taxes Committee's Sales and Income Tax Division. **HF2803**, sponsored by Rep. Gary Worke (R-Waseca), and **HF2914**, sponsored by Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters), both would exempt "services provided for the upkeep of a cemetery" from sales tax. The two bills, which Worke and Kalis said generated a lot of support at recent town meetings, will be considered as part of the omnibus tax bill.

More Minnesotans would be able to vote by mail under a bill on the way to the House floor.

HF2101, sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), would allow mail balloting in non-metropolitan area towns or cities with population under 1,000.

Under present law, towns with fewer than 400 citizens can vote by mail. The change would allow mail voting for city, county, and state elections in about 650 small municipalities, compared to the current 118.

The bill was approved Feb. 8 by the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee.

Frogs brought out the funniest in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 7. Before voting on Chair Willard Munger's (DFL-Duluth) bill for a study on deformed frogs, Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) said he'd vote yes only if Munger tells "the frog story" before the end of session.

"Not the one you told" in the paper, Trimble said, "but 'the grandfather and you fishing' frog story."

Munger, a former frog catcher, chuckled and suggested the story was more compelling when Trimble told it, and so he should feel free to do so.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) solved everything when she told Trimble that the chair could put the story on the World Wide Web.

"That forever after may fulfill your request," she told Trimble, who is an active Web browser.

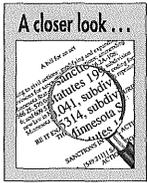


When was the state's parental leave law established?

The state's first parental leave law, allowing new birth or adoptive parents a six-week unpaid leave of absence, was established by the 1987 Legislature. The law also required insurance coverage to be extended to the employee taking the leave, at the employee's expense. The law has since been amended to include unpaid leave to attend a child's school conferences and activities, or to care for sick or injured children. A 1992 law mandated that the state make posters available (upon request) to employers that outline an employee's rights under the state parental leave law.

A closer look . . .

State-aided businesses would pay a livable wage



Minnesota legislators could be either pioneers in corporate accountability or killers of economic prosperity if they pass a proposed livable wage bill; it depends on who you ask.

A bill (**HF2562**) the House International Trade and Economic Development Committee narrowly approved Feb. 7 would require medium and large companies who get \$25,000 or more in state aid through loans, grants, or tax increment financing (TIF) to pay new

employees at least \$7.21 an hour — the 1995 federal poverty level for a family of four.

The livable wage concept was heavily debated during the 1995 session. The wage mandate was contained in a bill passed by the House on a 74-59 vote, but did not become law. Clark did succeed in requiring that businesses receiving tax breaks or \$25,000 in state grants or loans show job growth and establish wage goals (**CH224**).

Under **HF2562**, large non-profit organizations, defined as those with a salary ratio between the highest- and lowest-paid employee of 25 to 1 or greater, also would face the same requirements. Other non-profits and all businesses employing 20 people or less are exempt under the bill. The bill also exempts any company that can prove it would relocate to another state because of financial incentives offered by that state.

If **HF2562** passes, Minnesota would be one of the first states in the nation to tie state aid for companies to wage levels. Currently, Oregon is implementing a plan that withholds state assistance from medium and large companies with employees earning less than \$17,000 annually.

Elsewhere, cities and states are looking to increase low wages as well. Milwaukee passed a minimum wage of \$6.05 last year and Baltimore is seeking a similar initiative this year. Florida is considering a statewide poverty-level wage and the city of Tucson defeated such a measure last year.

Supporters say state and national climates are just right for a "corporate welfare" act.

"It certainly seems like there is more awareness of the disparity of incomes than even a year ago," said Alexa Bradley, program associate with the Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action, which is lobbying for the bill. "The whole issue of corporate accountability is very hot throughout the country. There's been all this attention to the crackdown on welfare recipients, and yet there is this whole other arena of public assistance where there's been very little attention paid."

Bradley said several other factors are working in the bill's favor. A new commissioner of the state Department of Trade and Economic Development who's interested in revitalizing rural Minnesota and 1996 being an election year are among those factors, she said.

But critics have launched a spirited attack on the proposal, with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Retail Merchants Association on the front lines.

Tom Hesse, manager of fiscal and workforce policy for the chamber, said the bill goes about economic revitalization in a piecemeal fashion that hurts individual businesses and ignores the overall problem.

"We agree there should be some accountability with our public dollars," he said. "But these economic development dollars benefit a single company. We believe very strongly that Minnesota should take a look at overall

and Economic Development is already doing, he said. Currently, economic recovery grants only go to metro-area companies paying an average wage of \$10 per hour and rural companies offering an average wage of \$8, Hesse said.

"The wage level is unnecessary," he said. "The department is exceeding their goals" of assisting companies paying \$10 and \$8 per hour in average wages.

Bill supporters say average wages aren't the best indicator of livable wages because large salaries can hide those at or below the poverty level.

Some of the 11 committee members who voted against the bill Feb. 7 related their personal experiences in business.

Rep. Eldon Warkentin (R-Coon Rapids) said his experience has taught him a wage mandate is the last thing businesses — and possibly state tax rolls — need.

"For 40 years I've represented community people and business in Coon Rapids," said Warkentin, who is a licensed public accountant. "And the biggest problem they have is all the government mandates imposed on them. We need to recognize here that we're not just asking for \$7 an hour but payroll taxes and other administrative increases . . . and all of

"We agree there should be some accountability with our public dollars . . . but these economic development dollars benefit a single company. We believe very strongly that Minnesota should take a look at overall costs of doing business in Minnesota."

—Tom Hesse, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

costs of doing business in Minnesota."

Hesse said restructuring property and other taxes "where Minnesota is the highest in the nation" would do more for economic development than Clark's bill.

He has two big problems with **HF2562**. Mandating a wage of \$7.21 per hour is problematic, Hesse says, because it doesn't let companies adjust wages to reflect recession when the poverty level wage is less. Bill supporters say that argument is irrelevant because they're not mandating a wage — only a wage at the poverty level, which would reflect economic cycles.

Hesse also objects to the bill because it seeks to do what the Department of Trade

these things will affect the bottom line of the corporate tax return."

Rep. Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth) predicted the bill would deprive rural Minnesota of businesses by pulling them toward the metro area.

"My concern is with a bill that mandates this statewide wage without any sort of an indexing," he said "This would naturally create incentives to locate jobs in areas where wages are already high. I think the natural tendency would be for businesses to locate in the metro area."

Clark said her bill will help — not hurt — rural areas by increasing wages and stimulating growth in depressed areas. She also em-

phasized her bill doesn't affect small businesses, deflecting critics who lump her proposal with last year's failed poverty wage referendum in St. Paul. Many believe opposition from small businesses thwarted efforts to mandate a poverty-level wage in St. Paul last year. (The referendum called for businesses receiving \$25,000 in aid from the city to pay its workers \$7.21 per hour.)

Rep. Don Ostrom (DFL-St. Peter) amended the bill calling for a study and report on low-paying jobs from the legislative auditor. That study would estimate the cost of individual government transfer payments by region and explore the state's role in increasing wages.

"I want to find out what we are paying as taxpayers when we have low-paying jobs," Ostrom said.

Supporters of the bill, including one from rural Minnesota, said the bill doesn't burden businesses but simply asks them to act responsibly.

"This is a very clear, reasonable bill," said Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby). "It's saying when the state gives you money, we intend it to help people with jobs — not to increase your profits."

Bradley of MAPA emphasizes the bill gives companies a choice.

"We only apply this to people getting subsidies," she said. "You can pay your employees \$4.25 an hour if you want, but once you start entering into the realm of receiving public assistance, we're saying we need something better back."

HF2562 now moves to the Economic Development, Infrastructure and Regulation Finance Committee.

— Kendall Anderson

Media Day on the Hill

More than 30 media people from across the state spent Feb. 5 at the State Capitol learning about state government.

The event, called "Media Day on the Hill," was sponsored by the Minnesota House of Representatives to acquaint state newspaper, radio, and television personnel with various aspects of the legislative process.

The chief clerk of the House introduced participants to the principal sources of rules of procedure for the House.

House fiscal analysts talked about Minnesota's budget, the bonding process, and K-12 education issues for 1996.

Information systems staffers discussed what's available on the Internet in the way of information about the House, then demonstrated how to access that information.

Reporters were paired with House members for a "Member-Media Dutch Treat Lunch" followed by a brief question and answer period, which allowed more time to question House Speaker Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) and House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon). Questions and responses focused on minimum wages, taconite taxes, the possibility of a new airport, the Minnesota Twins, and the content of 1996 Legislative Session.

The day culminated with a television control room tour led by the House television crew and a chance to watch a House floor session in the House chamber.



Speaker Irv Anderson and Minority Leader Steve Sviggum Feb. 5 answered questions from Minnesota journalists as part of Media Day on the Hill.

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Bill Introductions

HF3010-HF3163

Monday, Feb. 5

HF3010—Milbert (DFL) Taxes

Energy conversion system and photovoltaic device sales and use tax exemption extended.

HF3011—Delmont (DFL) Governmental Operations

Amateur Sports Commission entity employees provided benefits and insurance.

HF3012—Long (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Metropolitan Council levy limits modified, and livable communities demonstration account fund distribution provisions modified.

HF3013—Long (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources

Environmental improvement pilot program provisions modified, and penalties provided.

HF3014—Long (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources

Environmental Advisory Board transferred to the Office of Environmental Assistance.

HF3015—Long (DFL) Taxes

Revenue commissioner required to collect income tax return data and estimate tax burdens.

HF3016—Daggett (R) Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Heavy and utility equipment manufacturers regulated, and truck part definition modified.

HF3017—Larsen (R) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Airport construction restricted, noise mitigation plan inclusion and soundproofing provided, transitway construction required, met center purchase authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3018—Milbert (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources

Commercial fishing requirements and fees modified.

HF3019—Rukavina (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Virginia area ambulance district creation provided, tax levy authorized, and local approval required.

HF3020—Jennings (DFL) Judiciary

Juvenile county jail detention pilot project established, and report required.

HF3021—Entenza (DFL) Governmental Operations

Teachers Retirement Association member service credit purchase allowed related to a medical leave.

HF3022—Milbert (DFL) General Legislation, Veterans Affairs, & Elections

Constitutional amendment vote requirement eased, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3023—Mares (R) Health & Human Services

Constitutional standard established relating to abortion, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3024—Onnen (R) Judiciary

Juvenile court record information inclusion requirements specified.

HF3025—Cooper (DFL) Education

Work skills update demonstration program provided, and money appropriated.

HF3026—Osskopp (R) Governmental Operations

Gambling lawful purpose expenditure provisions modified.

HF3027—Dawkins (DFL) Taxes

St. Paul rental tax equity program extended.

HF3028—Weaver (R) Health & Human Services

Personal care assistant age requirement exemption created.

HF3029—Daggett (R) Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Wadena seasonal on-sale intoxicating liquor license issuance authorized.

HF3030—Wagenius (DFL) Judiciary

Firearm storage and locking requirements established.

HF3031—Kalis (DFL) Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regulation Finance

Waseca County FarmAmerica improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3032—Kelley (DFL) Taxes

Tax increment financing district election procedures modified.

HF3033—Johnson, A. (DFL) Education

School discipline policy development and implementation grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF3034—Clark (DFL) Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regulation Finance

Lyn/Lake/Jungle Theatre Community Performing Arts Center funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3035—Goodno (R) Taxes

Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3036—Opatz (DFL) Governmental Operations

Gambling lawful purpose expenditures to include tax and bill payment by veterans organizations.

HF3037—Anderson, B. (R) Environment & Natural Resources

Minnesota Wetlands Conservation law repealed.

HF3038—Johnson, A. (DFL) Education

Center for Arts Education, Faribault Residential Academies, and Children, Families, and Learning Department capital improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3039—Sviggum (R) Education

Independent School District No. 204, Kasson-Mantorville, special assessment levy authorized.

HF3040—Knoblach (R) Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Administrative rule fine amount restrictions provided.

HF3041—Knoblach (R) Governmental Operations

Public retirement provisions modified, pension policy review required, and actuarial audit responsibilities established.

HF3042—Murphy (DFL) Education

Regional public library reporting requirements modified.

HF3043—Johnson, V. (R) Environment & Natural Resources

Watercraft licensing fees modified.

HF3044—Osthoff (DFL) Economic Development, Infrastructure, & Regulation Finance

Humanities Commission appropriated money for moving expenses, and building operation and maintenance.

HF3045—Lourey (DFL) Education

Independent School District No. 100, Wrenshall, provided debt service aid.

HF3046—Carlson, L. (DFL) Financial Institutions & Insurance

Insurance coverage cancellation notification required via certified mail.

HF3047—Kinkel (DFL) Financial Institutions & Insurance

Insurance building replacement cost requirements regulated.

HF3048—Stanek (R) Judiciary

Great bodily harm crime definition modified.

HF3049—Kinkel (DFL) Education

Cass Lake High School renovation and conversion to multi-agency family services resource and learning center provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3050—Milbert (DFL)**Taxes**

Unsold pulltab and tipboard ticket tax refund or credit provided, and money appropriated.

HF3051—Kelso (DFL)**Taxes**

Nonschool property tax increases levied against market value.

HF3052—Ostrom (DFL)**Financial Institutions & Insurance**

Insurance agent termination as a result of contact with the Legislature prohibited.

HF3053—Leppik (R)**Health & Human Services**

Prescription dispensing authorized for prescriptions written by medical practitioners licensed anywhere in the United States.

HF3054—Dempsey (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Airport construction restricted, noise mitigation plan inclusion and sound-proofing provided, transitway construction required, met center purchase authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3055—Long (DFL)**Housing**

Low income housing tax credit program technical and policy provisions modified.

HF3056—Leighton (DFL)**Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regulation Finance**

Extended employment program appeal settlement provided, program provider audits authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3057—Wejcman (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

JOBS; community work experience program tribal JOBS program participant injury protection provided.

HF3058—Mulder (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Luverne wastewater treatment facility improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3059—Osskopp (R)**Taxes**

State acquired land in lieu tax payment authorized.

HF3060—Long (DFL)**Taxes**

Omnibus tax reform bill modifying education finance, property tax rates, local government aid, low income tax credits, sales and tobacco tax, constitutional amendment proposed, and money appropriated.

HF3061—Rukavina (DFL)**Taxes**

Mountain Iron tax increment financing district duration extended, and soils condition district created.

HF3062—Entenza (DFL)**Judiciary**

DWI; limited drivers' license issuance following a driving while intoxicated offense waiting period extended for drivers under age 18.

HF3063—Rest (DFL)**Taxes**

Economic efficiency and pollution reduction act adopted providing environmental emissions assessment, education property tax levy reduction, and refundable FICA credits, and money appropriated.

HF3064—Hasskamp (DFL)**Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs**

Gasoline used in motor sports competition exempted from oxygenation requirements.

HF3065—Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Women's suffrage memorial garden provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3066—Finseth (R)**Taxes**

East Grand Forks tax increment financing district duration extended.

HF3067—McCollum (DFL)**Education**

School bus safety provisions modified, and training requirements provided.

HF3068—Otremba (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Constitutional standard established relating to abortion, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3069—Workman (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Metropolitan Council required to perform state mandated county duties.

HF3070—Wejcman (DFL)**Local Government****& Metropolitan Affairs**

Neighborhood Revitalization Program purpose and requirements modified.

HF3071—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Morrison Brook in Itasca County provided trout stream protection, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3072—Bakk (DFL)**Environment****& Natural Resources**

Lake County land sales ratified.

HF3073—Mulder (R)**Governmental Operations**

Gambling Control Board license issuance and renewal authority provided.

HF3074—Murphy (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Constitutional standard established relating to abortion, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3075—Wenzel (DFL)**Taxes**

Unsold pulltab or tipboard ticket tax refund or credit provided, and money appropriated.

HF3076—Finseth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Individual sewage treatment system professional licensing requirement exemption provided.

HF3077—Lourey (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Day training and habilitation services reimbursement rate increase authorized.

HF3078—Lourey (DFL)**Financial Institutions & Insurance**

Day care service homeowner's insurance immunity provided.

HF3079—Mariani (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Migrant farmworker health and socioeconomic data study required, and money appropriated.

HF3080—Tuma (R)**Education**

State college and university student associations prohibited from contracting for lobbying services.

HF3081—Munger (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Wetland replacement, protection, and management provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF3082—Lourey (DFL)**Judiciary**

Grandparent visitation right provisions modified.

HF3083—Entenza (DFL)**Ways & Means**

Human Rights Department case backlog elimination required.

HF3084—Lourey (DFL)**Education**

School district late school activity transportation permitted, pupil practice vehicle operation restrictions provided, and money appropriated.

HF3085—Brown (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Herman; Lawndale Farms Environmental Learning Center improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3086—Orfield (DFL)**Education**

School enrichment partnership program funded, and money appropriated.

HF3087—McGuire (DFL)**Judiciary**

Harassment and stalking crime victim services and protection brochure created and disseminated, and money appropriated.

HF3088—Pugh (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Judicial Standards Board executive director salary established.

HF3089—Rukavina (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Gilbert off-highway vehicle recreation area established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3090—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Health care facility patient and resident human services transportation provider criminal background check requirement established.

Wednesday, Feb. 7**HF3091—Brown (DFL)****Agriculture**

Conservation easement agricultural land acquisition program established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3092—Orenstein (DFL)
Judiciary
Statute and court rule contributory fault state policy provided.

HF3093—Otremba (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Snowmobile trails board and fund established, and money appropriated.

HF3094—Bakk (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Amateur radio volunteer system established, and money appropriated.

HF3095—Paulsen (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Watershed district property owner petition provisions modified.

HF3096—Brown (DFL)
Governmental Operations
State employee health plans required to offer point-of-service products.

HF3097—Cooper (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Hospital, health maintenance organization, integrated service network, and community integrated service network assessments established, and money appropriated.

HF3098—Lourey (DFL)
Agriculture
Dairy farm information and technology services grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF3099—Peterson (DFL)
Agriculture
Sustainable agriculture development program established, and money appropriated.

HF3100—Bakk (DFL)
Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regulation Finance
Tourism loan program provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF3101—Clark (DFL)
Health & Human Services
AFDC/Youthbuild; Aid to Families with Dependent Children Youthbuild program earnings exclusion waiver request authorized.

HF3102—Mulder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Deer; extended muzzleloader deer hunting season repealed.

HF3103—Larsen (R)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections
Impounded and seized animal transfer prohibited to institutions engaged in research.

HF3104—Erhardt (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Airport construction restricted, noise mitigation plan inclusion and soundproofing provided, transitway construction required, met center purchase authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3105—Pawlenty (R)
Governmental Operations
State agency staff retirement savings and investments in technology and staff development provided, and money appropriated.

HF3106—Broecker (R)
Education
Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, and Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, provided grants for reading mentorship volunteer coordination, and money appropriated.

HF3107—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services
Nursing home nursing director requirements modified.

HF3108—Knoblach (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Water quality standards review act adopted, and money appropriated.

HF3109—Kelso (DFL)
Education
School site councils established and authority provided to make managerial decisions, school district performance based funding mechanism established, and money appropriated.

HF3110—Lynch (R)
Health & Human Services
Adult mental health services for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons provider appropriated money.

HF3111—Knoblach (R)
Labor-Management Relations
Re-employment insurance definitions modified related to taxi cab services.

HF3112—Kinkel (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Hubbard County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.

HF3113—Sarna (DFL)
Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regulation Finance
Stone Arch Bridge in Minneapolis repairs provided, and money appropriated.

HF3114—Pugh (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs
Fireworks sales permitted, and retailer licensing, regulation, restrictions, and penalties provided.

HF3115—Bettermann (R)
Taxes
Residential property market value increases limited related to the consumer price index.

HF3116—Frerichs (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Airport construction restricted, noise mitigation plan inclusion and soundproofing provided, transitway construction required, met center purchase authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3117—Delmont (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Interstate Highway No. 394 Minneapolis parking ramp use incentives provided for high-occupancy vehicles using other highways.

HF3118—Peterson (DFL)
Agriculture
Non-hybrid seed brand name registration required.

HF3119—Schumacher (DFL)
Governmental Operations
Legislators' retirement law coverage provisions specified.

HF3120—Wejman (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Medicare supplement insurance applicants to be offered long-term care insurance.

HF3121—Koppendray (R)
Economic Development, Infrastructure, & Regulation Finance
Kanabec County historic courthouse restoration provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3122—Paulsen (R)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs
Passenger vehicle long-term lessee information access provided.

HF3123—Pelowski (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections
Simultaneous multi-party candidacy permitted.

HF3124—Dawkins (DFL)
Judiciary
Challenge incarceration program scope expanded, and acupuncture treatment reference stricken.

HF3125—Hasskamp (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Snowmobile trails and enforcement account grants-in-aid provided, and money appropriated.

HF3126—Bettermann (R)
Health & Human Services
Unitary residence act coverage expanded to include community-based services, human service program derivative settlement reinstated, and social service and income maintenance programs separated.

HF3127—Cooper (DFL)
Rules & Legislative Administration
Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act/Public Health Service Act; President and Congress memorialized to facilitate the development and approval of new drugs and biologics.

HF3128—Skoglund (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Health insurance coinsurance, copayment, and deductible charges regulated.

HF3129—Carruthers (DFL)
Judiciary
Marijuana sale or possession in a motor vehicle law provided, handicapped parking law application clarified, uniform traffic ticket information inclusion specified, and fines increased.

HF3130—Skoglund (DFL)
Judiciary Finance
Probation defined, probation service providers jurisdiction clarified, and corrections department training and technical assistance required.

HF3131—Cooper (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health provider cooperative demonstration participation expanded, and review organization definition modified.

HF3132—Bettermann (R)
Environment
& Natural Resources
Alexandria Lake Area Sanitary District enabling law updated.

HF3133—Garcia (DFL)
Taxes
Airport noise impact area housing replacement district creation provided, and delayed homestead valuation provided.

HF3134—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Family adult foster care recruitment provided, and money appropriated.

HF3135—Paulsen (R)
Transportation & Transit
Household good movers deregulated, and permit conversion provided.

HF3136—Kelley (DFL)
Education
Statewide online information system established serving state colleges, universities, state government, and public school and private college libraries, and money appropriated.

HF3137—Lieder (DFL)
Economic Development,
Infrastructure
& Regulation Finance
Metropolitan area transportation appropriations provided.

Thursday, Feb. 8

HF3138—Sviggum (R)
General Legislation, Veterans
Affairs & Elections
Recall provided for elected state officers, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3139—Hasskamp (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Hunting and fishing rights affirmed and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3140—Daggett (R)
Health & Human Services
Medical Assistance asset transfer prohibition exception provided.

HF3141—Gunther (R)
Health & Human Services
Lewisville well replacement provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3142—Goodno (R)
Taxes
Border city enterprise zone duration extended.

HF3143—Bertram (DFL)
Taxes
Premixed drinks containing distilled spirits tax imposed.

HF3144—Leppik (R)
Health & Human Services
Child and adolescent sexual health institute programs funded, and money appropriated.

HF3145—Winter (DFL)
Taxes
Wind energy conversion system property taxes imposed.

HF3146—Brown (DFL)
Agriculture
Agricultural land alien ownership exception provided.

HF3147—Anderson, R. (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Nonresident youth small game license provided.

HF3148—Daggett (R)
Education
Independent School District No. 820, Sebeka, state aid and tax revenue restoration provided, and money appropriated.

HF3149—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Dental health maintenance organization established.

HF3150—Carlson, L. (DFL)
Education
Alcohol impaired driver education program provided, and money appropriated.

HF3151—Anderson, B. (R)
Environment &
Natural Resources Finance
Lake Charlotte flood control project funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3152—Long (DFL)
Education
Private schools receiving education vouchers required to comply with all state laws and rules governing public schools.

HF3153—Pugh (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Wetlands Conservation Act modified related to wetlands used for sewage sludge disposal.

HF3154—Pugh (DFL)
Judiciary
Juvenile court statutory procedure conformity provided.

HF3155—Entenza (DFL)
Education
School district technology planning required, and money appropriated.

HF3156—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Deer license fee decrease provided in the northeastern sector of the state.

HF3157—Rice (DFL)
Economic Development,
Infrastructure
& Regulation Finance
Historical society compensation policies modified, and money appropriated.

HF3158—Milbert (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Aquatic plant control permit issuance provisions modified.

HF3159—Lourey (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Aitkin County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.

HF3160—Leighton (DFL)
Education
Independent School District No. 497, Lyle, fund transfer authorized.

HF3161—Cooper (DFL)
Taxes
Minnesota Care tax imposition, collection, and administration provided.

HF3162—Solberg (DFL)
Local Government
& Metropolitan Affairs
Cohasset gas utility ownership and operation permitted.

HF3163—Wenzel (DFL)
Agriculture
Farmers; Congress memorialized to protect family farmers.

If you're following a bill that has yet to receive a hearing in the Legislature this session, you may have to wait until next year before the bill is considered.

The first committee deadline for the 1996 Legislative Session has come and gone and the second deadline will strike Feb. 16. Each year the House and Senate set deadlines which serve to weed out many of the hundreds of bills introduced each year.

The first committee deadline was Feb. 9. For further consideration, a bill must have cleared all policy committees in its house of origin by that date.

The second committee deadline

Committee deadlines

means that for continued consideration, a bill must clear all policy committees in the other legislative body by Feb. 16.

The third committee deadline is Feb. 23, meaning that for further consideration in the House and Senate, all bills with a fiscal impact and omnibus appropriation bills must clear their policy committees and be sent to the Ways and Means Committee (the Finance Committee in the Senate), the Taxes Committee, or the floor.

Although neither the House nor Senate leadership can pinpoint the exact day of adjournment, it is expected to be much earlier than the mandatory date set out in Minnesota's constitution.

The Minnesota Constitution prescribes that the Legislature shall not meet after the Monday following the third Saturday in May, which this year is May 20. But since the 1996 Legislative Session convened more than a month earlier than usual for the second year of the biennium, some expect adjournment before the Passover/Easter holiday the first week in April.

Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates, call House
Calls at (612) 296-9283. All meetings
are open to the public.

To have the daily and weekly schedules
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MONDAY, Feb. 12

8 a.m.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE & REGULATION FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rice

Agenda: Department of Economic Security
briefing. Centers for Independent Living/DES
update.

HF1404 (Lieder) Transportation commissioner
allowed to accept federal money on behalf of
nonpublic organizations for transportation
purposes.

HF2622 (Kinkel) Relating to capital improve-
ments; appropriating money to construct the
Battle Point historic site; authorizing sale of
state bonds.

HF2774 (Clark) Omnibus bonding bill provid-
ing capital improvements, and money
appropriated.

HF2725 (Clark) Develop green business devel-
opment program established to encourage
environmentally friendly business development,
bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Health & Human Services Finance Division/ HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield

Agenda: HF2303 (Greenfield) Human services
and health care provider criminal background
check provisions reconciled.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson

Agenda: Adoption of language to be placed in:

HF2156 (Johnson, A.) Education Omnibus Bill.

Property Tax & Tax Increment Financing Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ted Winter

Agenda: HF2797 (Tompkins) Seasonal recre-
ational property tax class rate reduced.

HF2958 (Erhardt) Changing the reference to
seasonal-recreational property.

HF2963 (Long) Providing a class rate for certain
unimproved property bordering water.

HF2965 (Goodno) Providing that referendum
levies are not spread on non-commercial sea-
sonal-recreational residential property.

HF2966 (Krinkie) Amending the constitution
to allow seasonal-recreational property owners
to vote on bonding and property tax questions
where the property is located.

HF2967 (Macklin) Changing the classification
of certain seasonal-recreational property.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Chuck Brown

Agenda: Presentations on the supplemental
budget, Legislative Commission on Minnesota
Resources, John Velin, director; Pollution Con-
trol Agency, Patricia Burke, division manager,
Water Quality Division.

10 a.m.

AGRICULTURE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Wenzel

Agenda: HF2454 (Tunheim) Changing require-
ments for Canola Commodity Council
referenda.

HF2115 (Harder) Adjusting certain net worth
definitions for certain RFA programs.

HF1302 (Finseth) Changing the definition of
"eligible person" for purposes of agricultural
chemical response.

HFXXXX (Brown) Providing an exception to
alien land ownership.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund

Agenda: HF2675 (Entenza) DWI plate
impoundment.

HF2779 (Entenza) Omnibus DWI Bill.

HF2386 (McGuire) Omnibus Data Practices
Bill.

HF2604 (Pugh) Authorizing a judge who has
resigned in good standing to be appointed to
serve as a judge of any court.

HF2315 (Macklin) Marriage dissolution; elimi-
nating a requirement that certain documents be
acknowledged.

Other bills to be announced.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: HF2642 (Mahon) Merging utilities
reporting requirements.

HF2784 (Trimble) Modifying provisions relat-
ing to dry cask storage of nuclear waste.

If you would like to testify, please call 296-8826
by 4 p.m. Friday, Feb 9.

12:30 p.m.

GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings

Agenda: SF1800 (Stevens); HF2032 (Koppen-
drayer) Changing procedures for disposition of
closed armories.

Other Senate bills may be added.

HOUSING

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Karen Clark

Agenda: SF1925 (Johnson, J.B.); HF2129
(Clark) Relating to the MN Housing Finance
Agency; makes technical changes.

HF2672 (Jennings) Relating to landlords and
tenants; changing the interest rates on security
deposits.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: SF1919 (Runbeck) replacing HF2319
(Perlt) Relating to reemployment insurance,
technical and administrative changes.

Other items to be added.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

After Session

Property Tax & Tax Increment Financing Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ted Winter

Agenda: HF2659 (Winter) Reforming state and local finance.

HF2710 (Bishop) Requiring non-school property tax increases to be levied against market value.

HF2711 (Van Dellen) Property tax reform proposal.

HF3051 (Kelso) Requiring non-school property tax increases to be levied against market value.

HF3060 (Long) Reforming state and local taxes.

WAYS & MEANS

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg

Agenda: Re-referral of bills.

4 p.m.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: Continuation of morning agenda.

4 p.m. or After Session

Joint Higher Education Finance Division and University of Minnesota Finance Division/ EDUCATION

500S State Office Building

Chrs. Reps. Tony Kinkel,

Becky Kelso

Agenda: HF268 (Orfield) Appropriating money to reduce tuition fees.

HF3136 (Kelley) Statewide online information system.

TUESDAY, Feb. 13

8 a.m.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: To be announced.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

500N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: To be announced.

MinnesotaCare Finance Division/ HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Roger Cooper

Agenda: HF2443 (Cooper) Expanding the definition of "demonstration provider" to include nursing facilities for purposes of participation in the Alternative Demonstration Project.

HFXXXX (Cooper) MinnesotaCare tax technical changes.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Chuck Brown

Agenda: Presentation of governor's supplemental budget, Department of Natural Resources, Ron Nargang, deputy commissioner.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn

Agenda: HF2298 (Marko) Board of Government Innovation.

HF2484 (Pugh) U of M hospital workers.

HF2858 (Wenzel) Camp Ripley National Guard Education Center use authorized as a state education and training center.

HF2224 (Tomassoni) Employee relations department technical corrections bill, civil service position selection process established, department of employee relations data practices modified, and accrued vacation leave donation to sick leave accounts allowed.

HF2829 (Kinkel) State College and University Board of Regents composition modified, and board member duties specified.

HF2982 (Wenzel) Minnesota diary produces board established, and money appropriated.

HF2408 (McGuire) Auto theft council; surcharge.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest

Agenda: HF2433 (Macklin) Governor Carlson's tax proposals.

HFXXXX (Rest) Sales Tax Advisory Council recommendations.

HF2898 (Erhardt) Repealing the inclusion of property tax refund on the property tax statement.

HF2542 (Milbert) Exempting materials used in taxable services.

HF2104 (Bertram) Making permanent the sales tax exemption for used farm machinery.

HF2555 (Wenzel) Extending the sales tax exemption for used farm machinery.

HF2805 (Bertram) Extending the sales tax exemption for used farm machinery.

HF2869 (Olson, E.) Extending the sales tax exemption for used farm machinery.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: Committee bills with bonding recommendations from the Health & Human Services

Finance Division, Rep. Lee Greenfield, chair; Judiciary Finance Division, Rep. Mary Murphy, chair.

COMMERCE, TOURISM & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Sarna

Agenda: HF2590 (Bertram) Omnibus Liquor Bill.

HF2752 (Luther) Relating to consumer protection; providing for the licensing and regulation of pawnbrokers.

Primary Source Report, John Williams, House Research Department. More bills may be added.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

Agenda: HF2974 (Rest) Providing for an advisory referendum on a metropolitan sports facility.

Other bills may be added. (Committee will reconvene at 5 p.m., if necessary.)

2:30 p.m.

Government Efficiency & Oversight Division/WAYS & MEANS

500N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Howard Orenstein

Agenda: To be announced.

Subcommittee on Civil Law/JUDICIARY

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Pugh

Agenda: HF2357 (Dawkins) Requiring specificity in visitation orders; providing for the establishment of visitation dispute resolution programs.

HF2453 (Pugh) Reviving and extending certain civil actions barred by the statute of limitations. Other bills to be announced.

4 p.m.

Joint SENATE FINANCE/WAYS & MEANS/ Legislative Audit Commission

123 State Capitol

Chrs. Reps. Ann H. Rest, Loren Solberg, Sen. Gene Merriam

Agenda: Receive and discuss the Program Evaluation Division report on trends in the state and local government spending. Other legislators interested in this topic are invited to participate.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: To be announced.

6 p.m.

EDUCATION

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson
Agenda: Discussion on voucher issue.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 14

8 a.m.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
INFRASTRUCTURE &
REGULATION FINANCE**

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rice
Agenda: To be announced.

**Health & Human Services Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: To be announced.

**Higher Education Finance Division/
EDUCATION**

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel
Agenda: HF2960 (Orenstein) Job skills demonstration project.

**K-12 Education Finance Division/
EDUCATION**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson
Agenda: HF2156 (Johnson, A.) Education Omnibus Bill.

**Property Tax & Tax Increment Financing
Division/TAXES**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ted Winter
Agenda: To be announced.

Sales & Income Tax Division/TAXES

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Milbert
Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Chuck Brown
Agenda: Presentation governor's supplemental budget, Department of Trade and Economic Development, Public Facilities Authority, Terry Kuhlman, director; Pollution Control Agency, Patricia Burke, division manager, Water Quality Division; Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Paul Burns.

10 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: HF2799 (Milbert) Omnibus Game and Fish Bill.
HF2598 (Bakk) Quartering of deer.
HF2052 (Daggett) Reciprocal youth small game license with North Dakota.
SF1984 (Beckman); HF2374 (Gunther) Watonwan River canoe and boating route.
HF3013 (Long) Modifications to Environmental Audit Law.

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS &
INSURANCE**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: SF121 (Sams); HF480 (Lourey) Insurance; remedy to an insured when an insurer refuses in bad faith.
SF1040 (Samuelson); HF872 (Huntley) Insurance; sale of long-term care insurance.
HF2378 (Osthoff) Omnibus Insurance Bill.
Additional Senate Files may be added.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: Any bill not completed at Feb. 12 Judiciary Committee meeting.
HF2842 (Kelley) Requiring victim's account of domestic assault to be considered in determining arrested person's release; requiring notice to law enforcement agencies, battered women's programs, and sexual assault programs of release of arrested persons; requiring notice of bail hearings to victims of domestic assault.
HF2845 (Rest) Relating to the legislative auditor.
HF2045 (Skoglund/Bishop) Community notification.
Other bills to be announced

12:30 p.m.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim
Agenda: Senate files will be heard.

1 p.m.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros
Agenda: SF2504 (Riveness); HF2894 (Mahon) Economic recovery grants.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

After Session

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS &
INSURANCE**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: To be announced.

4 p.m.

**University of Minnesota Finance Division/
EDUCATION**

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: HF2896 (Leppik) Removing conditions from permanent University fund.
HF2897 (Kelso) Center for Biomedical Engineering.

6:30 p.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: To be announced.

7 p.m.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim
Agenda: Senate files will be heard.

THURSDAY, Feb. 15

8 a.m.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
INFRASTRUCTURE &
REGULATION FINANCE**

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rice
Agenda: To be announced.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson
Agenda: Omnibus K-12. Education Finance Bill.
(This meeting will continue at 6 p.m. in 200 State Office Building, if necessary.)

JUDICIARY FINANCE

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy
Agenda: To be announced.

**MinnesotaCare Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Roger Cooper
Agenda: Continuation of Feb. 13 agenda. Other bills to be announced.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Chuck Brown
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn
Agenda: Completion of agenda from previous meeting.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest
Agenda: HF3063 (Rest) Environmental Efficiency and Pollution Reduction Act.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis
Agenda: Committee bills with bonding recommendations from the K-12 Education Finance Division, Rep. Alice Johnson, chair; Higher Education Finance Division, Rep. Tony Kinkel, chair; University of Minnesota Finance Division, Rep. Becky Kelso, chair.
HF2909 (Dawkins) State bond issuance provided for housing purposes, and constitutional amendment proposed.

**COMMERCE, TOURISM &
CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Sarna
Agenda: To be announced.

**GENERAL LEGISLATION,
VETERANS AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS**

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings
Agenda: Senate bills to be announced.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT &
METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: HF2670 (Schumacher) Relating to Minnesota Municipal Board.
HF3012 (Long) Relating to metropolitan government.
Other bills to be announced.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

After Session

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg
Agenda: To be announced.

FRIDAY, Feb. 16

8 a.m.

**Transportation Finance Division/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
INFRASTRUCTURE &
REGULATION FINANCE**

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder
Agenda: To be announced.

**Health & Human Services Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: To be announced.

**K-12 Education Finance Division/
EDUCATION**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson
Agenda: Agenda to be announced.

**Property Tax & Tax Increment Financing
Division/TAXES**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ted Winter
Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

**University of Minnesota Finance Division/
EDUCATION**

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: U of M Academic Health Center request.

10 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES**

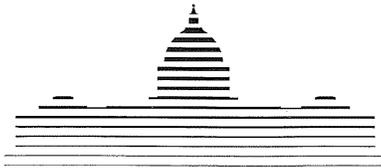
200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: HF2194 (Weaver) Project Excellence and Leadership (XL).
HF2393 (Ness) Project XL.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: Any bill not completed at Feb. 14 Judiciary Committee meeting.
HF2357 (Dawkins) Requiring specificity in visitation orders; providing for the establishment of visitation dispute resolution programs (This bill will be heard only if it is passed by the Civil Law Subcommittee at its Feb. 13 meeting).
HF2453 (Pugh) Reviving and extending certain civil actions barred by the statute of limitations (This bill will be heard only if it is passed by the Civil Law Subcommittee at its meeting of Feb. 13).
HF2041 (Wejzman) Requiring police officers to undergo training in community policing.
HF2524 (Rhodes) Authorizing a third consecutive term for the chief judge of the Fourth Judicial District.
HF2408 (McGuire) Auto theft prevention program.
Other bills to be announced. Other bills will be scheduled based upon Senate action and progress in other House committees.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim
Agenda: Senate files will be heard.



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Majority Leader: Phil Carruthers
Minority Leader: Steven A. Sviggum

MINNESOTA INDEX

Probation in Minnesota

States with more adults on probation per 1,000 residents than Minnesota	4
States with a lower incarceration rate than Minnesota	1
Minnesotans on court-ordered probation, Dec. 31, 1994	97,318
as a ratio of all Minnesotans age 12 or older	1:38
Number of those who were juveniles	15,346
Additional offenders on parole or supervised release from prison	1,929
Number of additional probation officers needed across Minnesota to meet minimum standards for offender supervision, according to a Dec. 1994 state task force	564
Number of probation officers in Minnesota at the time	804
Additional dollars appropriated by the 1995 Legislature for probation services for the 1996-97 biennium, in millions	\$14.5
Percent of convicted adult felons in Minnesota placed on probation rather than being sent to prison	80
Increase in the number of adult felons in Minnesota on probation, in percent, 1984-1994	69
Increase in the number of juveniles in Minnesota on probation, in percent, 1984-1994	100
Adults on probation per 1,000 residents, Pine County, highest in Minnesota ...	52.4
Adults on probation per 1,000 residents, Kittson County, lowest in Minnesota ...	2.9
Adults on probation, Hennepin County, highest in Minnesota, Dec. 31, 1994	19,929
Ratio of property offenders to drug offenders in Minnesota prisons, Dec. 31, 1994	2:1
Percent of all felons on probation under supervision for a property offense	49
Percent of all prisoners incarcerated for a "person offense," (assault, rape homicide, kidnapping, robbery)	63
Inmates served by Department of Corrections Intensive Community Supervision program, 1/1/93 - 12/31/94	222
Cost per day, per inmate	\$18.75
Dollars saved by not having those 222 inmates in prison, in millions	\$2.5

Funding for Probation Services, January 1996, Office of the Legislative Auditor; 1994 Probation Survey, Minnesota Department of Corrections; Putting the Pieces Together, Probation Standards Task Force, December 1994.

For more information

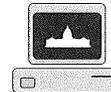


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