

North Carolina Legislative Update, May 26, 2017

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This week at the General Assembly, Senate Committees were busy while House Budget leaders rolled out parts of their version of the budget in subcommittees. House leaders have indicated they hope to hold a vote on the budget bill next week.

House Budget Proposal

Parts of the House budget proposal were released in appropriation subcommittees Thursday. There are significant differences between the House and Senate proposals, but the overall spending level is at \$22.9 billion over the biennium for both budgets. Over all, the House's proposed \$8.8 billion in education spending is a little less than the Senate's proposed \$9 billion, although the House's plan does include less significant cuts to the Department of Public Instruction and Department of Environmental Quality. Other House budget plans include the removal of a cap on state funding for light rail projects, an executive protection detail for Lt. Governor Dan Forest, and the doubling of funds for the state pre-kindergarten program.

Next week the budget will be released, heard, and voted on in the full House Appropriations Committee before making its way to the House floor. The last step of the legislative process will be the House and Senate working together through a conference committee to finalize a budget. It then goes to the Governor for his signature (or veto). Legislative leadership maintains their intention to have the budget finished and to the Governor by June 15.

Drones (H337)

A bill that seeks to make various revisions to the laws governing the use of unmanned aircraft systems in North Carolina passed through the Senate Transportation Committee this week. Among other changes, the bill would remove restrictions on the use of special imaging technology, would clarify that emergency management systems may use drones for any functions related to their charge, and would align with federal law criteria for which a person is eligible for a commercial operation permit. The bill will be heard next in Senate Rules.

For more information, please contact the Brooks Pierce Government Affairs Team, linked below.

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