

Brooks Pierce Capital Dispatch: Updates from the NC General Assembly and Governor's Office, March 19, 2021

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This week, a number of new bills were introduced at the General Assembly and work continued on the state budget.

Local Government Choice of Energy Ordinances

A bill (H 220) that would ban local governments from passing ordinances restricting the use of a specific energy source by an end user passed the House Energy and Public Utilities Committee this week. Bill supporters noted that some cities in states such as California have passed such ordinances—for example, banning gas-powered appliances in new homes. The bill is now in the House Commerce Committee.

Water and Sewer Rates

Two House Committees passed a bill (H 219) this week that would allow private water and sewer utilities to secure multi-year rate hike approvals from the N.C. Utilities Commission. It would allow these utilities to present rate proposals for a three-year period that include the cost of planned infrastructure upgrades. The bill will next be considered by the full House.

Daylight Saving Time

Identical bills (H 307, S 39) have been introduced to make daylight saving time permanent in North Carolina. A similar bill (H 350) passed the House in 2019 but did not pass the Senate. Even if North Carolina enacts a state law on this topic, it would only go into effect if Congress passed an authorizing law. States are currently allowed to opt out of daylight saving time but are not allowed to make it permanent.

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State Budget

Appropriations Committees continued meeting jointly this week to discuss the State's budget process, existing agency budgets, and receive updates from agencies. These joint committee meetings will run through late March and then the Senate appropriators will begin meeting separately to draft a budget bill as that chamber considers the budget first this year. Press reports indicate that Gov. Cooper may present his budget recommendations during the week of March 22.

For more information, contact a member of the Brooks Pierce Government Affairs Team, linked below.

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