

Brooks Pierce Capital Dispatch: Updates from the NC General Assembly and Governor's Office, August 27, 2021

08.27.2021

This week at the North Carolina General Assembly, the Senate confirmed a new DEQ Secretary, budget conferees worked on the budget bill and legislators considered various other bills.

Senate Confirms Former Brooks Pierce Member as DEQ Secretary

The Senate this week unanimously confirmed the nomination of Elizabeth Biser to be secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality. She was named to this post by Gov. Roy Cooper in June. Biser is a former government affairs advisor at Brooks Pierce.

Budget Bill

Legislators from both chambers began work in a conference committee on the biennial budget bill (S 105) this week. Among the differences between the bills passed by each house are the amount of educator salaries, tax reductions and infrastructure spending. Although a new budget bill was not enacted before the end of the state's fiscal year on June 30, state government operations are continuing pursuant to state law with spending at the FY 21 recurring funding levels.

Health Care Certificates of Need

The House this week passed a bill (S 462) that amends the Certificate of Need process under which state officials must approve purchase of certain health care equipment and facilities. Among other things, the bill raises the dollar thresholds requiring state approval and puts a time limit on approved projects. The Senate earlier passed the bill and it now goes to the Governor for his consideration.

Medical Marijuana

This week, the Senate Health Care Committee approved a bill (S 711) that would authorize the use of marijuana for certain medical conditions. Three Senate committees have now passed the bill. Among other things, it would allow use by people with a certain listed "debilitating medical condition" for which a physician provides a written certification. The Department of Health and Human Services would approve use by patients and a newly created Medical Cannabis Production Commission would license suppliers upon recommendation of the Department. The bill will next be considered by the Senate Rules Committee.

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