

SESSION WEEKLY

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LEGISLATURE ON THE FAST TRACK
A SESSION WEEKLY MILESTONE
PAWLENTY OF PLANS
DRIVING A NEW PLAN

HF2553 - HF3017



SESSION WEEKLY

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. During the 2007-2008 legislative session, each issue reports House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and provides other information. No fee.

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Welcome to the second year of the 85th Legislative Session

There was a time when ordinary citizens were barred from attending legislative meetings or getting copies of bills. There was a time when few understood or even had access to the legislative process.

It took a commitment from people like former Chief Clerk Ed Burdick to make the legislative process more transparent. And 25 years ago, *Session Weekly* was born out of that effort.

Since the first issue in March 1984, the weekly newsmagazine of the Minnesota House of Representatives has stayed true to its founding mission of providing free nonpartisan information about the legislative process, and coverage of House floor sessions and committee hearings. Today, it is only one of the information tools provided by the House reflecting its ongoing commitment to openness.

Now, with greater use of technology and the Web, the House provides more opportunities to reach new audiences with nonpartisan legislative news.

For instance:

- Session Daily - e-mail updates when news from the House warrants;
- unedited, gavel-to-gavel television coverage of House floor sessions and select committee hearings;
- downloadable podcasts of committee meetings and communications from House members;
- easily accessed and updated schedules and information;
- policy and fiscal analysis of many bills; and
- photo images of House members and activities.

It is perhaps fitting that *Session Weekly's* 25th year marks the first time it is being published on the Web in a format familiar to those who get their news over the Internet.

All of us associated with *Session Weekly* are proud to continue the tradition of providing nonpartisan news from the House. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

— Session Weekly staff

CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Bonding • 5
Education • 5

Environment • 6
Higher Education • 6

Notes • 7
Late Action • 23

BILL INTRODUCTIONS (HF2553-HF3017) • 14 - 22

FEATURES

FIRST READING: Legislature sets out on the fast track • 3

AT ISSUE: Governor offers betterment ideas in State of the State address • 8

AT ISSUE: Minnesotans could pay more in taxes for transportation • 9

FEATURE: *Session Weekly* — rooted in a commitment to keep the public informed • 10-11

PEOPLE: Special session delivers for Drazkowski's district • 12

FEATURE: Gas tax increase seen as palatable • 23

MINNESOTA INDEX: Session 2008 • 24

On the cover: Rep. Paul Gardner, center, is followed by Rep. Kate Knuth as they make their way through a crowd of people with signs, and lobbyists for the first day of the 2008 legislative session, Feb. 12.

—Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

On the fast track

After a busy interim, members have big plans for 2008

BY SESSION WEEKLY STAFF

Many committee and commission hearings. Road trips. A special session for flood relief. Yes, it was a busy interim for legislators. Now, can members translate what they've learned into successful legislation in a three-month window? And can it be done in an election year when tension between parties continues to run high?

A shorter, even-year session is traditionally focused on capital investment projects, but 2008 has the potential to be far from ordinary, with members trying to do more in many areas while trying to overcome a multi-hundred-million dollar budget deficit that may only get larger.

Let's take a look at some of the potentially biggest topics.

Bonding

What a difference a year makes.

The 2007 February Economic Forecast projected a \$2.6 billion surplus through the

biennium ending June 30, 2009. Now, the national downturn in the housing sector, its effect on the state's lumber industry, tighter credit restrictions, higher energy prices and the lack of state job growth has turned the state's economy south with a projected \$373 million biennial deficit. The February Economic Forecast, to be released Feb. 28, is expected to contain even more dark news.

All this will help determine just how much money the state can bond for capital projects, which traditionally is the focus of the second year of the biennium.

On the session's first day, members began

discussing Gov. Tim Pawlenty's capital investment proposal, which includes a fourfold increase over the previous record investment in local bridges. But some House Capital Investment Finance Division members think that if a comprehensive transportation bill is enacted, it would free up bonding money for other areas, such as higher education.

Of the governor's nearly \$1.09 billion proposal, \$965 million would come in general obligation bonding. The package stays within the 3 percent debt service guideline. But the amount could be adjusted downward if the February Economic Forecast shows a worsening of the state's deficit.

More than 43 percent of the governor's proposal is aimed at statewide projects, 29.8 percent to projects in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and 27 percent to Greater Minnesota projects.

Transportation accounts for nearly 40 percent of the bill, including \$225 million for local bridge replacement. The amount would be allocated on a priority basis from lists compiled by the Department of Transportation.

Higher education accounts for 23.7 percent of the bill. The University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system would each receive \$129 million, under Pawlenty's plan.

The environment and outdoors would receive \$175 million, or 16 percent, of the proposed funds. This includes \$46 million for drinking water and wastewater treatment facility improvements, and \$30 million for wetland preservation activities.

Other than \$40 million for a new arena in Duluth, the proposal contains no local projects.

Budget

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, characterizes Minnesota's economic outlook as a "deep concern."

"There are two looming problems: the housing devaluation is not over and the credit crunch is not over." He said the upcoming February Economic Forecast will make for some tough decisions as legislators deal with a greater than expected financial shortfall in the short- and long-term. "It's going to have to



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

On the opening day of session, a conference committee was called to discuss the bill that would put an amendment to the constitution before voters that would dedicate funding for the outdoors and arts. Members of the Dedicated Funding Conference Committee, from left, Rep. Dennis Ozment, Rep. Rick Hansen, Rep. Jean Wagenius, Rep. Frank Moe, Sen. Dennis Fredrickson, Sen. Richard Cohen and Sen. Satveer Chaudhary sign the conference committee report.

First Reading continued on page 4

First Reading continued from page 3

be a balanced approach of cutting and finding new funding resources," he said.

The loss of 23,000 jobs in the last few months and shrinking personal income are most worrisome, he said. Those are signs of long-term problems that need greater state investment in education, research and development to solve.

The committee's lead Republican, Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), echoes Solberg's concern.

"If we are smart, we will make some budget adjustments for the out years," she said. But any proposal to raise taxes to solve the economic woes will be met with opposition by her party. "We have to respect the families' budgets. They are hurting more than the state," she said.

At a Feb. 12 press conference, House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) and Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls) said a comprehensive transportation bill and a capital investment bill would help the economy by providing new jobs within the next few months. Once those bills are on the governor's desk, Pogemiller said they will begin, in earnest, to deal with balancing the budget.

Energy

One of the areas in which Pawlenty and the DFL-controlled Legislature managed to find common ground last year was energy policy, and many lawmakers are hoping that spirit of cooperation will carry into 2008. On the agenda for this year: new legislation aimed at curbing global climate change and creating a cleaner energy economy.

Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson), chairman of the House Energy Finance and Policy Division, said his division will likely act on the recommendations of the Minnesota Climate

Change Advisory Group. The group, which was mandated by last year's Next Generation Energy Act, is charged with identifying strategies to mitigate the impact of global warming. Its recommendations are expected later this month.

One of the mitigation strategies likely to be discussed is a possible statewide "cap and trade" system for carbon emissions. Under such a system, total emissions would be capped and individual power plants assigned "allowances" of carbon emissions that they could either use for themselves or sell to one another. Other initiatives may include tightening vehicle emissions standards and increasing energy efficiency standards for new buildings constructed in the state.

Hilty said the Legislature may present the governor with a resolution concerning peak oil — the point at which global oil demand will exceed total production capacity, which is projected to occur within as little as five to 10 years. During the interim, Hilty's committee held two separate hearings on the phenomenon, which some experts say might cause social and economic chaos without proper planning. Hilty and Sen. Jim Carlson (DFL-Eagan) co-sponsor a resolution that would ask the governor for, in Hilty's words, "a recognition of the problem."

Environment

On the heels of a busy interim for the House's environmental committees, lawmakers hit the ground running, passing a long sought-after measure that has been almost perennially on the wish lists of environmentalists and outdoors supporters.

HF2285, sponsored by House Majority Leader Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm) and Pogemiller, will ask voters in the Nov. 4 general election to approve a three-eighths of 1 percent sales tax increase and constitutionally dedicate the money to the wildlife, natural

habitat, clean water and the arts. It was passed 85-46 by the House and 46-16 by the Senate on Feb. 14. The governor does not act on constitutional amendments.

Legislators are hoping to keep that momentum as they attempt to address a broad range of environmental issues, many likely to be initiatives designed to combat or mitigate the effects of global climate change. These include possible new vehicle fuel efficiency standards modeled on a law that was recently enacted in California — a law that, as its opponents note, was recently struck down by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"There's a lot of it that's going to deal with climate change," House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley) said of his committee's agenda for the session.

First up, however, will be a review of bonding requests from the Department of Natural Resources and other state agencies by members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division. Improvements and repairs to state parks and trails are likely to figure heavily in the discussions. As outlined in his Feb. 13 State of the State address, Pawlenty supports purchasing land for a new state park at Lake Vermilion; opponents of the governor's plan say the money would be better spent on repairs and upgrades to the state's current parks and trails.

Health and Human Services

An overall health care package to include universal care for all Minnesotans by 2011 and a stronger focus on chronic disease prevention are the main focuses for House health committees this session. Restructuring payments to providers would also be included in that health package, said Rep. Paul Thissen

Fast Track continued on page 13



STITCHED PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW VONBANK

The collapse of the Minneapolis Interstate 35W bridge brought attention to the state's transportation needs and its aging bridges and roads. The new structure is expected to be open by the end of 2008.

BONDING

Governor's project list draws criticism

Although Gov. Tim Pawlenty's \$1.09 billion capital budget request hasn't been formalized into a bill, House Capital Investment Finance Division members had plenty of questions.

No action was taken on the proposal, which includes \$965 million in general obligation bonding, shared Feb. 12 and 14 by Commissioner of Finance Tom Hanson.

For example, a \$15 million recommendation to help fund a projected \$23 million cleanup of the Washington County Landfill had plenty of critics. Members wanted to know why Maplewood-based 3M Company, the known source of contaminants in the landfill, wasn't footing the entire bill for cleanup. It was noted that other landfills in the state are in need of remediation, and the governor has not recommended money for those requests.

Transportation and higher education funding proposals also had their critics.

Nearly 38 percent of the governor's bonding money is targeted toward transportation needs, but at the expense of higher education proposals, members said.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) said that passage of an omnibus transportation finance bill could free up more money for education needs. "I can't think of a better place to put the money ... to ready students for new jobs. Our colleges need a lot of help," he said.

The governor's bonding priority areas are:

- \$416 million for transportation and transit;
- \$258 million for higher education, with \$129 million for both the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system;
- \$175 million for environment and outdoors;
- \$96 million for economic development;
- \$68 million for state building asset preservation;
- \$50 million for veterans and military affairs; and
- \$41 million for public safety and corrections.

Overall, about \$294 million in recommendations are targeted for Greater Minnesota, \$324 million is for the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and another \$470 million would be for projects of statewide significance.

This is the largest bonding package proposed by a governor in the state's history, Hanson said.

— L. SCHUTZ

A VOCAL GREETING



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Protesters greet members entering the House Chamber Feb. 12, the first day of the 2008 legislative session.

EDUCATION

Library funding proposed

A plan to help libraries across the state with accessibility issues could be in the House K-12 Finance Division bonding recommendations.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) sponsors HF2558, which would provide \$10 million for library accessibility projects. It was heard by the division Feb. 12, but no action was taken. The bill has no Senate companion.

The Legislature created a program for library accessibility projects in 1994 and approved \$1 million for the program. In 2005, it was expanded to include other types of library improvements. Bonding bills in 2005 and 2006 each contained \$1 million in library funding.

Current law limits individual accessibility grants to \$200,000 or 50 percent of the project costs, whichever is less, and improvement grants are limited to \$1 million or 50 percent of the project costs, whichever is less.

However, Elaine Keefe, a lobbyist for the Minnesota Library Association, said that libraries that bypassed the grant process and came directly to the state received substantially more than the cap.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), the division chairwoman, said a need-based system seemed to be the fairest process,

instead of the money going to the powerful or the fortunate.

Keefe said that, in the past, \$6.62 has been provided locally for every \$1 of state support. She said the renovation needs are staggering because 54 percent of the state's public libraries were built before 1969 and 33 percent were built before 1939. She said that state public libraries

Mark your calendar

- Feb. 28: Release of February Economic Forecast.
- House and Senate committee deadlines:
March 14: Committees to act favorably on bills in the house of origin;
March 19: Committees to act favorably on bills or companions that met the first deadline in the other body; and
March 28: Committees to act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills.
- Spring recess is tentatively scheduled from 5 p.m. March 19 to noon March 25.
- May 19: Constitutional deadline for adjournment.

For updated committee schedule information, go to www.house.mn and click on the green tab tagged "Schedules." This is updated throughout the day. For a recording of committee meeting times and agendas, call 651-296-9283. This is updated once a day. To sign up for e-mail notification of upcoming meetings, go to www.house.mn/list/join.asp?listname=houseschedule.

are expected to request \$120 million this year and \$260 million next year.

Greiling expects the division to hear all bonding proposals within the next week, and submit its proposal to the House Capital Investment Finance Division shortly thereafter.

— T. HAMMELL

Red Lake seeks more school funding

A \$30 million request to complete two schools in northern Minnesota is on hold.

HF1120, sponsored by Rep. Brita Sailer (DFL-Park Rapids), would appropriate \$30 million to the Red Lake School District to complete high school and middle school renovation projects, including classroom additions, heating plant upgrade and replacement of areas where mold growth is an issue.

It was held over Feb. 12 by the House K-12 Finance Division for possible inclusion in its bonding recommendations.

A companion bill, SF1099, sponsored by Sen. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee. The funding was in last year's bonding bill vetoed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty. It was not in his bonding proposal this year.

"We're just kind of flummoxed that it didn't end up in the governor's bonding request," said Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), the division chairwoman.

Because the district has such low property value, and very little tax base because most of its land is owned by Red Lake tribal members, the district has received four capital loans from the state since 1992 for school projects. It received \$18 million in 2005 to build a new middle school and renovate the high school.

Districts, like Red Lake, without enough property tax base to finance construction projects can qualify for state assistance under the Maximum Effort School Aid Law. Under this program, the state borrows money through bonds and lends it to qualifying school districts.

Monte Hammitt, a consultant to the district, said the district is in dire need of finishing the project, and infrastructure is stretched as far as it can go. "We need to finish our school so we can move forward."

— T. HAMMELL

ENVIRONMENT

Toxic chemicals a 'silent epidemic'

Although they have never breathed polluted air, drank contaminated water or eaten toxic foods, the average unborn baby may have literally hundreds of potentially dangerous chemicals in their body.

OPENING SONG



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Prior to the start of the legislative session Feb. 12, Anna Carey and Maddy Sorenson sing "Shines for All to See," a song created for Minnesota's sesquicentennial. Mary Louise Knutson plays the piano.

That was the message of Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, to members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee and House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division at a joint meeting Feb. 11. No action was taken.

"We don't want (children) to come into the world pre-polluted, and unfortunately that's not the case," Cook said.

Calling the proliferation of toxic chemicals in the environment a "silent pandemic," Cook cited a recent study that found an average of roughly 200 industrial byproducts, pesticides and other substances present in a random sampling of 10 unborn American children.

Cook said that some of the chemicals found had been banned more than 30 years ago, but had apparently remained in the mothers' bodies and been passed on to the children.

According to Cook, the health effects of many of the chemicals in question are unknown; however, some of them have been linked to rising incidences of leukemia, brain cancer, birth defects and other serious conditions. He called for new government regulations on industrial and agricultural chemicals at both the state and federal levels.

David Wallinga, food and health director for the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, said that many chemical pollutants can cause developmental disabilities in children that place an enormous burden on society in

the form of increased special education and health care costs, among others.

Rep. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley) said the state should consider funding more research on the subject, but also suggested that federal action might be more effective in regulating the chemicals.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) seeking to remind his fellow lawmakers that agricultural chemicals have practical and commercial benefits, asked rhetorically, "What are the reasons we have farm chemicals, and what good do they do mankind?"

- N. BUSSE

HIGHER EDUCATION

MnSCU bonding request offered

Officials from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system acknowledge that a reduction in their bonding request would put them further behind.

MnSCU officials shared its \$350.2 million proposed capital budget with the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division Feb. 12. No action was taken.

Of the proposal, \$273 million would come from state dollars, with the rest self-financed.

"Every state college and university in the system will benefit from this proposal," said

Chancellor James McCormick.

However, in his bonding proposal, Gov. Tim Pawlenty proposes \$99.4 million in general obligation bonding, including \$40 million for asset preservation. The system seeks \$110 million for things like roof and exterior repairs, mechanical and electrical improvements and elevator and fire safety code upgrades. Requests from the individual campuses to MnSCU administration exceeded \$303 million, \$68.5 million more than was requested two years ago.

Allan Johnson, MnSCU associate vice chancellor for facilities, said the system's current backlog in asset preservation is estimated at \$672 million, in part because of limited state money in past biennia and because buildings are getting older.

Other projects on the governor's list include \$25.5 million for a science center renovation at Minnesota State University, Mankato; \$14.8 million for a science building renovation at St. Cloud State University to meet the needs of students in the nursing and pre-nursing programs; \$13.5 million for a transportation and applied technology renovation at St. Paul College; \$13.2 million for classroom additions and renovations at Inver Hills Community College; and \$5.8 million in systemwide science lab improvements.

"While the repair and maintenance of our current structures is important, Minnesota colleges cannot offer a quality education without new and improved facilities on campuses," said Scott Formo, president of the Minnesota State College Student Association.

Jered Weber, a board member of the Minnesota State University Student Association, said that fewer state funds could put more of a burden on students with increased tuition to meet system needs.

The University of Minnesota shared its \$225.5 million request for state bonding with the division on Valentine's Day.

The request includes \$100 million for asset preservation, \$48.3 million for a new building to contain science classrooms and student support services on the Minneapolis campus, \$26 million to renovate Folwell Hall on the Minneapolis campus, \$24 million for a new Bell Museum of Natural History on the St. Paul campus, \$10 million for a building to house the civil engineering program in Duluth and \$7.5 million for a Gateway center in Morris.

Pawlenty's recommendation is for \$129 million, including \$40 million for asset preservation, but zero for the museum.

"Our ability to carry out our mission will be compromised without continued, sustained investment in buildings and infrastructure," said President Robert Bruininks.

— M. COOK

NOTES

Several members to step down

Caucus night in Minnesota (held this year on Feb. 5) is the traditional start of the campaign season for the November general election.

Several House members have announced they will not seek re-election, while others have announced intentions to run for a different office. More announcements are expected.

House members who have formally announced they will not seek re-election:

- Rep. Brad Finstad (R-Comfrey)
- Rep. Scott Kranz (DFL-Blaine)
- Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount)
- Rep. Neva Walker (DFL-Mpls)

Those seeking party endorsement for different office:

- Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie) - Third Congressional District
- Rep. Randy Demmer (R-Hayfield) - First Congressional District

— L. SCHUTZ

New House chaplain needed

After a little more than a year of service as House chaplain, the Rev. Paul Rogers has stepped down.

Before being unanimously elected to the



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

The Rev. Paul Rogers steps down from the podium after receiving a certificate commemorating his work as the House Chaplain for the 2007 session. Rogers will not be returning to the House for the 2008 session.

position on Feb. 1, 2007, Rogers had retired from full-time ministry responsibilities at the end of 2006.

A heart attack last June and his desire to fully retire from all professional responsibilities pushed him to give up his role at the House, he said.

House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) presented Rogers with a House resolution Feb. 12 thanking him for his service.

During his 37-year pastoral career, Rogers served congregations in Minnesota, South Dakota and Europe.

Looking at his time at the House, Rogers said, "It's been interesting and moving to see the depths of commitment of the legislators and the staff. I wish the whole state could experience this."

To fill the position, Kelliher will gather names of potential candidates, including suggestions from leaders in the religious community, and then meet with other House members to review the names.

Once the interview process for the next nominee is complete, the name will be presented to the full House for a vote.

— C. GREEN

Friendly advice

As Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) strode to the table Feb. 12 to advocate funding for land acquisition near Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, he received some friendly advice from Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia).

Rukavina, chairman of the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division, noted that Hilty has a newly replaced hip, but was quickly corrected by Hilty that it is actually two new hips.

"If I'm not mistaken, they're made out of titanium aren't they?" Rukavina asked.

"I believe they're ceramic," Hilty answered, laughing.

"Don't fall down, buddy," Rukavina responded.

— M. COOK

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Pawlenty of plans

Governor offers lots of betterment ideas in State of the State address

BY COURTNEY BLANCHARD

Gov. Tim Pawlenty took his State of the State address on the road to St. Cloud, where he called on lawmakers to reform health care and education. Pawlenty opened his Feb. 13 speech by celebrating the state's accomplishments during its 150th anniversary, but drew somber attention to the trials of last year's flooding, drought, forest fires and the Interstate 35W bridge collapse.

"In 2007, Minnesota faced a decade's worth of disasters in a year's time," he said. "But in the midst of trouble, our state and our nation saw the character and resolve of Minnesota come shining through."

The political scene was also turbulent. Last year, the governor delivered his speech at the traditional venue of the House chamber, when the budget surplus was estimated to top \$2 billion and hopes were high for bipartisan cooperation with the newly-elected DFL majority.

This year's speech, his sixth, came amidst a looming \$373 million budget deficit and high tension between the DFL and Republican caucuses, who are renegotiating several bills vetoed last session.

Reoccurring themes popped up, however, as Pawlenty offered up ways to improve the state's education system, suggested a cap on property taxes and pledged to veto any tax increases.

Education

Pawlenty again emphasized improving the state's education system, but this time he said he wants to address teacher training.

"Much needs to be done, but let's prioritize by focusing on the area of most acute need and highest impact — training for math and science teachers," he said.

Pawlenty proposed a "world-leading summer training institute" for math and science teachers and asked lawmakers to increase funding for regional math and science academies by 50 percent.

He suggested developing an interactive teaching toolbox modeled after video game technology, available to teachers statewide.

"Let's start by developing a world-class, digitally-stored, always-available, anywhere, anytime, jaw-dropping, eye-popping teaching toolbox accessible to all our teachers and students," he said.

Pawlenty also said he wants to make it easier for mid-career professionals to enter the teaching field, and added that tenured teachers should be held more accountable with annual evaluations.

Health Care

"Minnesota is the best place in the nation to lead the way on major health care reform," Pawlenty said.

The health care system should focus on quality of care instead of how many procedures a doctor performs, he said.

Using a market-driven system, Pawlenty proposed lowering costs by switching to electronic medical records, standardizing billing, and preventing and treating chronic conditions. The savings could

"For too much of this decade, we've bounced from one budget crisis to the next, handcuffed by the Governor's political pledges and paralyzed by the scope of the challenges in front of us. That has to stop."

— House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher

"I think it was a positive message and it cast a good view for the session as far as parameters he set."

— Minority Leader Marty Seifert



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Gov. Tim Pawlenty delivers his State of the State address in St. Cloud.

be applied to lower premiums or to extend coverage to the uninsured, he said.

Transportation

Pawlenty didn't linger on the topic of transportation, as the Minnesota Department of Transportation and its commissioner, Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau, grappled with a limited budget while fielding accusations from those who claimed MnDOT was to blame for the bridge collapse and a crumbling transportation infrastructure.

He urged lawmakers to use bonding, not taxes, to fund transportation projects and received a standing ovation from those in his party after he pledged to use his "taxpayer protection pen" to veto any proposed increase in taxes.

State of the State continued on page 13

Driving a new plan

Minnesotans could pay more in taxes for transportation

By Mike Cook

It hasn't taken long to get the wheels turning on a new transportation funding package.

Sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), HF2800 is similar to the one vetoed last year by Gov. Tim Pawlenty, but also contains some bonding aspects that aim to quickly fix some of Minnesota's estimated \$2.4 billion backlog of deteriorating roads and bridges.

Introduced Feb. 12, the bill was approved one day later by the House Transportation Finance Division on a 12-5 party-line vote, and has stops scheduled in the House Capital Investment, Finance, Taxes and Ways and Means committees by Feb. 19.

A companion bill, SF2521, sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), is also on the fast track. The Senate Transportation Budget and Policy Division heard the proposal for a second time on Valentine's Day.

Lieder and Murphy said the proposal doubles as an economic stimulus package because it would create an estimated 33,000 jobs with good wages and benefits in each of the next five years.

The bill, anticipated to raise \$8.3 billion

in the next decade, calls for a 2-cent gas tax increase on the first day of the month after enactment and another 3-cent bump on Sept. 15, 2008. Taxes on all other fuels would be raised proportionally. The gas tax, which has not been raised since 1988, would also be indexed to inflation, with an annual update beginning Sept. 15, 2010.

According to Lieder, a person who drives 11,000 miles a year, at an average of 20 miles per gallon, would pay an extra \$42 per year.

A \$25 tax credit would be created for lower income people to help offset the increase.

In addition, the bill calls for an increase in vehicle tab fees and removal of tab fee caps instituted by former Gov. Jesse Ventura. However, the change only takes effect once a new vehicle is purchased. The minimum fee would remain at \$35.

"This bill relies on user fees, which is a fair system for funding transportation," said Margaret Donahoe, legislative director of The Minnesota Transportation Alliance. "Those who use the system, pay for the system."

Residents in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area could be subject to a 0.5 percent sales tax increase without a

referendum, if their county leaders choose to join a joint powers board. If all metropolitan counties join, that is expected to produce almost \$2.28 billion in revenue in the next 10 fiscal years.

The board would be charged with allocating new revenues so that at least 50 percent goes for transit purposes and 25 percent for construction and reconstruction of trunk highways and routes of regional significance. The remainder is flexible between transit and roads. No more than 1.25 percent of the total revenues can be used for bicycle and pedestrian programs.

In the other 80 counties, a referendum would be needed to increase the sales tax. If the county adjoins one that is part of the joint powers board, it could join the board and impose the tax without a referendum.

Funding transportation through a sales tax should be statewide at a lower rate, said Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), who opposes the bill.

Lieder said an even larger impact comes from the bonding portion of the proposal.

"We have basically \$2.2 billion in trunk highway bonding for 10 years," he said. That includes \$300 million for bridges and \$200 million for roads in each of the first two years. Pawlenty has suggested local road and bridge projects be funded by bonding.

Lieder said it is estimated to cost \$660 million to repair or replace the 13 trunk highway bridges on trunk highways considered fracture-critical. "If this bill were to pass, MnDOT could basically let contracts on all those bridges right after the bill passes, if they would use certain procedures like design-build."

The bonds would be repaid through a gas surtax of up to 2.5 cents, beginning in 2010. That increase would be removed once the bond interest and principal are paid.

The bill is expected to be on the governor's desk by the end of the month.

If the bill is vetoed by Pawlenty, using his self-termed "taxpayer protection pen," it is expected to be overridden in the Senate, but five Republicans would need to go against the governor and join all DFLers for an override in the House.

Rep. Doug Magnus (R-Slayton) doesn't think the votes are yet there. "Some parts of this bill are better, some parts are worse, but we're making progress." 



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

John Wilson, right, and David Greene, members of the Coalition to Fund Transportation Now, don stove pipe hats and beards on President Abraham Lincoln's birthday and to draw attention to the transportation issues that were discussed on Feb. 12, the opening day of session.



Going strong at 25

Session Weekly — rooted in a commitment to keep the public informed

By Nick Busse

Since the first issue rolled off the presses in March 1984, much has changed with Session Weekly: its eight pages have grown to 24; the keyline boards and typesetting machines have been replaced by laptops; the photographers' darkroom has been replaced by digital editing software; and a new thing called the Internet is now home to a full online version of the magazine.

One thing that hasn't changed — in addition to the staff still pulling the occasional all-nighter to keep up with the legislators — is Session Weekly's mission: keeping the public informed in a nonpartisan way. And although many may not remember it, that was once a radical concept.

Today, for the most part, it goes without saying that citizens have a right to know what goes on in their government. Former Chief Clerk Ed Burdick, however, remembers a time at the Minnesota House of Representatives when there was no Session Weekly, no House Public Information Services, and in fact, no public information at all.

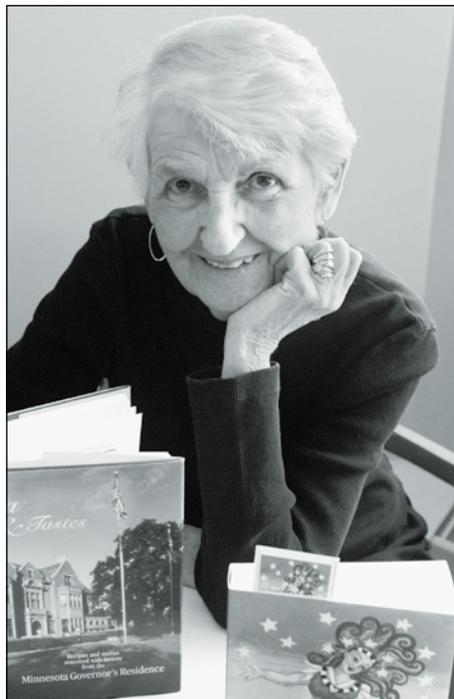
"When I first came to work at the House [in 1941], there was no such thing as a full-time legislative employee, and there were no public records. If you came to the Capitol three months after the session adjourned, there was no place to

go to check on any legislative records. They were all locked up," Burdick says.

Back then, ordinary citizens were barred from attending committee meetings, much less testifying. Nor could they get copies of bills. In fact, since the technology didn't yet exist to reproduce bills quickly and en masse, the legislators didn't even get their own copies.



Former Chief Clerk Ed Burdick was among those advocating in 1971 for the creation of an "Office of House Public Information."



Jean Steiner poses with her books. Steiner transformed the "Office of House Public Information" into a permanent and valued fixture at the House

(The lucky ones got to read one of two printed copies of a bill before voting on it.)

In short, no one really knew much about what went on at the Legislature.

That was then. Today, in the pages of this magazine, a full staff of writers, editors and photographers provide comprehensive and in-depth coverage of the legislative process here at the House, from gavel to gavel.

As we begin our 25th straight year of publication, we reflect on the long road that brought us to where we are today, the road that lies ahead, and the revolutionary idea that first produced Session Weekly.

An information office

According to Burdick, in the late 1960s and early '70s, legislative bodies across the country began establishing public information offices as a way of making the legislature more visible

at a time when, in his words, it was "really not a co-equal branch of government." At that time, many legislatures (Minnesota's included) met for a few months every other year. Governors, who worked every day, tended to get all the glory.

"The legislatures — around the country, not just in Minnesota — said, 'Hey, we've got to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and do a better job of promoting the legislature.' And that's exactly what happened," he says.

In 1971, Burdick and a small group of legislative staffers

PHOTOS BY ANDREW VONBANK

approached House leadership and pitched the idea of an “Office of House Public Information.” It was a hard sell, but they got permission to hire a session-only employee.

“It was a one-person operation, and he had a table in a hallway. It really wasn’t an A-plus deal,” he recalls.

The office got off to a shaky start, hiring and then losing two public information officers in as many years. One problem was a perceived lack of credibility: many of the representatives doubted that a House public information office could remain nonpartisan while working, essentially, for partisan House leadership.

That all changed, however, with the hiring of an energetic and talented newcomer named Jean Steiner.

Focus on the public

Steiner, who previously worked as a public relations writer for the Minnesota Medical Association, was brought on as the House’s new public information officer in December 1973. She remained in that post for the next 15 years, during which time she transformed the office into a permanent and valued fixture at the House.

Although she had never been “politically involved” and knew little about the inner-workings of the Legislature, Steiner came to the job with a powerful conviction: that the focus of public information should be on “educating the public, not just reaching out to politicians.”

That was an unusual approach at the time. Up until then, Steiner says, “All information offices had a political person at the head of them; that was the right of the person in power.” Her revolutionary idea was to present objective information to the public in a strict nonpartisan manner.

In addition to publishing a variety of educational materials, including legislative directories, informational

pamphlets such as “How a Bill Becomes a Law,” and a painstakingly assembled legislative district finder, the office established an annual booth at the Minnesota State Fair. It also began printing legislative newsletters.

From 1975 to 1983, Steiner and her staff experimented with a variety of newsletter formats. One of the most popular, the Weekly Wrap-Up (1976-1981), had its funding cut during a budget crunch; however, in 1984 she was able to start publishing a new, smaller version. It was called Session Weekly.



The first Session Weekly from 1984.

A resounding success

When Steiner was hired in 1973, the House’s information office consisted of exactly two people: Steiner and her session-only assistant, Susan Shephard, who would later become Susan Carlson — as in Mrs. Gov. Arne Carlson. Their work wasn’t very glamorous.

“[Susan and I] worked terribly, terribly hard for the information office. It was well into the night every night,” Steiner says.

It paid off, however, and it wasn’t long before awards and acclaim began pouring in from around the country, both for the office and for Steiner herself. Soon, information officers from other states began calling to

find out what kind of projects the Minnesota House was working on.

“Jean took hold and that office really succeeded,” Burdick says. “The public was happy with it, the newspapers were happy with it.”

Steiner even recalls attending a national

convention for public information officers in which the main presenter, a reporter from the Des Moines Register, declared, “I don’t know why you selected me as the keynote speaker, because I don’t believe in public information offices — except for one, and that’s in Minnesota, where they are attempting to educate the public, and that could work.”

Eventually, Steiner was able to bring on a larger staff that included front desk office assistants, session writers, photographers and

unpaid interns. Today, the office, now called House Public Information Services, includes 11 permanent and eight session-only staff members, and, in addition to publications and photography, is responsible for providing the House’s television coverage.

A bright future ahead

Steiner and Burdick are both retired now, and live coincidentally in the same building in a Roseville retirement community. Since she left the House, Steiner has performed a variety of work, most recently as an author. She co-wrote two books with her daughter, Mary Steiner Whelan — “For the Love of Children” and “This Year I Sing.” The latter she also wrote with her granddaughter, Shawn Whelan. Steiner has also performed public relations work for Mary and Shawn’s nonprofit group, Give Us Wings, which help impoverished women in Kenya and Uganda. Burdick retired from the House as chief clerk in 2005.

As for Session Weekly, after nearly a quarter of a century of evolution, its basic formula remains the same: articles highlighting key legislative activity; information on House and Senate members and committees; and features on the state’s history and culture. Over the years, photos and improved graphic design have been added, along with longer articles.

The magazine remains almost totally unique among government-produced publications. Nebraska is the only other state known to have a weekly nonpartisan news magazine (Unicameral Update) devoted entirely to state legislative affairs.

It is perhaps fitting that Session Weekly’s 25th year marks the first time it is being published in an HTML format on the Web, as House Public Information Services continues to expand its activities and presence on the Internet. But despite ever-changing technology, our basic mission is unlikely to change.

“I think the success of the House information office was due to the young people that were willing to work extremely hard because they believed in it,” Steiner says. “They believed it was helping the public. And I kept bringing that home to them. We have 134 bosses, as the chief clerk always said, but we all have 2 million plus bosses, and that’s who we look for — the faces behind those representatives.”



If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature’s Web page at: www.leg.mn

Flood relief

Special session delivers for Drazkowski's district

By **NICK BUSSE**

Former Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), now the state's labor and industry commissioner, offered a word of advice to the man who



Rep.
Steve Drazkowski

would succeed him as the state representative from District 28B: "Just stick to your values."

His successor, Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Wabasha), who was sworn in Aug. 16, 2007, said he's lived by the creed of "rural values" his whole life, emphasizing hard work and community service. He intends to bring these values to the Capitol.

"I grew up on a beef farm and learned early about rural ethics and values ... and that's

really translated very well into my ability to connect and to relate well to our rural district," he said.

Drazkowski, a 42-year-old cable contractor who spent 14 years as an agent and educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, said he intends to deliver for his district, especially in the areas of property tax relief and rural transportation infrastructure.

He got the chance to deliver earlier than expected. When two days' worth of heavy rains caused major flood damage in southeast Minnesota in late-August, Drazkowski's district was among the hardest hit. On Sept. 11, 2007, the Legislature convened to approve a flood-relief package, and Drazkowski was able to spend his first night on the House floor helping his district recover from a natural disaster.

Drazkowski, whose father was a township

supervisor and county commissioner, has been an active member of the Republican Party, and in his youth spent many years with organizations like 4-H and Future Farmers of America. He said he felt like the time was right to "jump into the fray" of state politics.

A self-described "big outdoorsman," Drazkowski enjoys hunting and fishing in his spare time. He lives in Wabasha with his wife, Laura, and daughter, Kinsey.

DISTRICT 28B

2002 Population: 36,528

Largest city: Goodview

Counties: Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona

Top concerns: Property tax relief and rural transportation infrastructure

Special session brings disaster relief

Less than a month after heavy rains resulted in rushing floodwaters creating a path of destruction through parts of southeast Minnesota, state lawmakers met in special session Sept. 11, 2007, to approve a stream of money to help several southeastern Minnesota communities rebuild.

Sponsored by Rep. Ken Tschumper (DFL-La Crescent) and Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes (DFL-Winona), the \$157.3 million law includes state aid to seven counties that were designated federal disaster areas following the Aug. 18-19, 2007, storms. Seven people were killed, nearly 1,500 homes damaged and approximately 300 were destroyed.

Effective Sept. 13, 2007, the law provides \$72.3 million of state assistance from the General Fund and \$56 million in general obligation bonding. It also includes \$1 million from the petroleum tank release fund.

The allocations will assist with homeowner and business cleanup; the refurbishing or rebuilding of public infrastructure, including roads and bridges, school facilities cleanup,

repair or replacement; increased student transportation costs; student enrollment changes; replacing state facilities and restoration of natural resources; and help with historic structure cleanup and repair.

The law includes:

- \$51 million to replace roads and bridges;
- \$45 million for employment and economic development purposes;
- \$16 million in low-interest and forgivable loans to homeowners;
- \$4.2 million to repair and replace state facilities and restore area natural resources;
- \$1 million in property tax abatements for flooded homes and businesses;
- \$584,000 in education assistance to include school cleanup and repair, offset enrollment changes and to assist with increased student transportation costs;
- \$250,000 for historic site cleanup, repair and replacement costs; and
- \$100,000 for the Health Department to conduct indoor air quality investigations and sampling in public facilities and nonprofit organizations.

The law also provides \$3.7 million for "flood and drought recovery assistance to affected agricultural producers;" \$1 million to help Cook County and Grand Marais with costs associated with a fire in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness earlier in 2007; \$200,000 in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to Crookston for flood recovery and mitigation issues; and \$100,000 in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to Browns Valley to assist in recovery from a March 14, 2007, flood.

Further, the law includes \$2 million to provide a state match necessary to receive \$53.2 million in federal grants and aid for the Interstate 35W bridge collapse. It also prohibits insurance companies from stating or implying to a policyholder that filing a claim related to the bridge collapse could result in non-renewal or cancellation of that policy or future premium increases.

SSHFI*/SSSF1/CH2

— M. Cook

Fast Track continued from page 4

(DFL-Mpls), chairman of the House Health and Human Services Committee.

The Health Care Transformation Task Force and the Legislative Commission on Health Care Access, met in the interim to discuss access to health care in Minnesota. Both came to similar conclusions on universal health care and focusing on prevention and risk assessment of chronic conditions for long-term cost savings, said Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth), chairman of the House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division. Chronic conditions include diabetes, coronary artery and heart disease, asthma, depression and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

"All of this is directed at making health care affordable for people," Thissen said.

Pawlenty expressed similar sentiment on affordability during his State of the State address. He suggested a dramatic reformation to the current health care system, including treating chronic diseases to extend the cost savings to more uninsured.

The commission also recommends health insurance reform to help bring about universal health care.

The recommendations include establishing a set of measurements and reporting goals for insurers to use as standard pay-for-performance models, and establishing uniform expectations and reporting on community benefits to be provided by non-profit health plan companies.

According to the task force recommendations, the current provider payment structures do not meet the needs of patients and health care

providers. By giving incentives or rewards to providers that use innovative methods for higher quality care and lower costs, it would free up doctors and nurses to practice medicine the way they and their patients want, Thissen said.

"I hope the Legislature takes into account the cost of not doing anything in addition to the cost of moving forward with transformation," he added.

Transportation

A bridge collapse and Department of Transportation funding were both highly energized interim topics.

When the Interstate 35W bridge collapsed Aug. 1, killing 13 people and injuring 85 others, some members wasted little time to begin using the collapse as a symbol of the needed funding for deficient state roads and bridges. Some wanted a special session called in hopes of passing a comprehensive funding package to help relieve the estimated \$2.4 billion in needs.

At a pre-session press conference Feb. 11, Kelliher said a gas tax and Twin Cities metropolitan area sales tax increase, in last year's bill vetoed by Pawlenty, are likely to be revisited this year. "I don't think you can hardly accomplish anything without these," she said. Both are included in HF2800, an omnibus transportation finance bill quickly working its way through the House.

With the immediacy of state funds needed for the bridge replacement, MnDOT officials sought \$195 million in emergency funding to keep all other Fiscal Year 2008 projects on schedule. A Transportation Contingency Appropriations

Group, which included House and Senate leaders, met a handful of times, but allocated only about half of the requested amount.

That amount, to be reimbursed once federal funds are received, is expected to provide the department sufficient funds to let scheduled projects through February. Members, including Solberg, said it would permit the full Legislature to have a say in the additional department funding before the March letting of transportation projects.

However, the new transportation funding package, sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), would cover the needed funding.

The Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims and Pawlenty agreed to create a special \$1 million fund for survivors and victims' families to make up for lost earnings not compensated from other sources, such as workers' compensation or disability insurance. No legislative approval is needed. The money comes from existing appropriations to the Trunk Highway and General funds for tort claims.

A bill for more victim compensation (HF2553), sponsored by Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley), was approved Feb. 14 by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee and sent to the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee. Sen. Ron Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park) is expected to offer a similar bill in the Senate. Latz expects a final version to be passed by mid-March.

- House Public Information Services' Nick Busse, Mike Cook, Patty Ostberg and Lee Ann Schutz contributed to this story. 

State of the State continued from page 8

Yet, he asked lawmakers to pass a bipartisan transportation bill.

"We can't continue the stalemate that has existed for three decades over these issues," he said. "I remain hopeful we can overcome the politics and rhetoric of this debate."

A 21st century economy

While remaining firm to his promise for no state tax increases, Pawlenty proposed a new entity, the "21st Century Tax Reform Commission" comprised of Minnesota employers, entrepreneurs and investors to recommend tax reforms to boost the economy.

Pawlenty also asked for support on his September proposal, the Strategic Entrepreneurial Economic Development (SEED) initiative, to help create new businesses and jobs.

Going greener

Pawlenty called for the Legislature to bond up to \$20 million to funnel into low-interest loans that communities can use for green energy sources. He also proposed to increase the use of biodiesels, like soybean oil, in diesel fuel from 2 percent to 20 percent.

Pawlenty asked lawmakers to purchase 3,000 acres of land along Lake Vermilion for a new state park using the Environmental Trust Fund instead of the general fund.

Veterans

Pawlenty asked the Legislature to pass a military and veteran's package that he proposed in November. The package expands services for veterans, including educational benefits, and supports businesses that employ veterans.

He thanked Chaplain Major John Morris, of the Minnesota National Guard, who led the invocation before his speech, and helped found the state's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program. The program helps reintegrate soldiers returning from overseas. 

If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature's Web page at: www.leg.mn

Tuesday, Feb. 12

HF2553-Winkler (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Catastrophe survivor compensation fund established.

HF2554-Carlson (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Special session convened by majority vote of both houses of the Legislature or by order of the presiding officers of both houses, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2555-Slawik (DFL)
Finance

Child care assistance provider reimbursement rates increased.

HF2556-Eken (DFL)
Finance

State park rehabilitation and development funding provided.

HF2557-Bly (DFL)
Finance

University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Station dairy facilities funding provided.

HF2558-Murphy, M. (DFL)
Finance

Library accessibility and improvement grants funding provided.

HF2559-Brown (DFL)
Finance

Wind energy production tax removed from county apportionment deduction for school districts.

HF2560-Ruud (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Neuropsychological testing coverage required for children diagnosed with cancer, and medical assistance coverage extended.

HF2561-Slawik (DFL)
Finance

Early childhood learning and child protection facilities grants modified.

HF2562-Kelliher (DFL)
Finance

Minneapolis; Orchestra Hall and Peavey Plaza pre-design funding provided.

HF2563-Hilty (DFL)
Finance

Big Lake Area Sanitary District wastewater treatment system funding provided.

HF2564-Hilty (DFL)
Finance

Barnum supply well funding provided.

HF2565-Hilty (DFL)
Finance

Carlton supply well funding provided.

HF2566-Hilty (DFL)
Finance

Moose Lake wastewater collection and treatment facility project funding provided.

HF2567-Scalze (DFL)
Taxes

Local government aid formula need measure provisions modified.

HF2568-Wardlow (R)
Finance

Eagan; Ring Road project completion funding provided.

HF2569-Anzelc (DFL)
Finance

Minnesota Public Utilities Holding Company Act adopted.

HF2570-Solberg (DFL)
Finance

Special Minnesota sesquicentennial license plates authorized.

HF2571-Howes (R)
Finance

Paul Bunyan State Trail development funding provided.

HF2572-Greiling (DFL)
Finance

Guidant John Rose Minnesota Oval improvements funding provided.

HF2573-Hansen (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Pesticide use prohibitions modified.

HF2574-Hamilton (R)
Finance

Windom Dam renovation or removal funding provided.

HF2575-Wollschlager (DFL)
Finance

Red Wing biosolids processing facility funding provided.

HF2576-Greiling (DFL)
Finance

Guidant John Rose Minnesota Oval improvements funding provided.

HF2577-Welti (DFL)
Finance

Independent School District No. 2899, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, community education fund balance adjustment corrected.

HF2578-Sertich (DFL)
Finance

Floodwood business park development funding provided.

HF2579-Bigham (DFL)
Finance

Washington County; Disabled Veteran's Rest Camp improvements funding provided.

HF2580-Haws (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Elections; right of access to multiple unit residences for campaign and election purposes clarified.

HF2581-Howes (R)
Finance

Ah-Gwah-Ching Regional Treatment Center Campus redevelopment funding provided.

HF2582-Howes (R)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Vietnam Veterans Day designated as March 29.

HF2583-Hamilton (R)
Finance

Jackson County; Prairie Ecology Center funding provided.

HF2584-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Finance

Nassau fire station funding provided.

HF2585-Ward (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Ambulance services; inter-facility transport requirements modified.

HF2586-Howes (R)
Health & Human Services

Cass County hospital district established.

HF2587-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Smoking ban exception removed relating to patients in a locked psychiatric unit.

HF2588-Ward (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Regional treatment centers and state-operated nursing homes relocation authorization required.

HF2589-Hamilton (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Worthington Regional Hospital included in privatization retirement coverage.

HF2590-Ward (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board members authorized to serve two consecutive terms.

HF2591-Olin (DFL)
Health & Human Services

First responders authorized to staff basic life support ambulances under certain conditions, and staffing flexibility allowed for rural ambulance providers.

HF2592-Koenen (DFL)
Finance

Upper Sioux Community water system improvements funding provided.

HF2593-Koenen (DFL)
Finance

Southwest Area Storm Sewer Project development funding provided.

HF2594-Dill (DFL)
Finance

North Shore state parks and trails funding provided.

HF2595-Hosch (DFL)
Finance

Paynesville; Washburne Avenue improvements funding provided.

HF2596-Hosch (DFL)
Finance

Cold Spring downtown riverfront redevelopment project funding provided.

HF2597-Hosch (DFL)
Finance

Warner Lake Park land acquisition funding provided.

HF2598-Hosch (DFL)
Finance

Stearns County; Rocori Trail funding provided.

HF2599-Brod (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Memorial Day observances county expenditure limit increased.

HF2600-Kelliher (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division

Minneapolis; Interstate 394 engine brakes use restriction authorized.

HF2601-Fritz (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Cannon River wild and scenic rivers program lands removed.

HF2602-Nornes (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice

Police vehicles used to transport police dogs exempted from window glazing restrictions.

HF2603-Olin (DFL)
Finance

Kittson County ATV trail funding provided.

HF2604-Olin (DFL)
Finance

Thief River Falls; multi-events complex phase II aquatic center funding provided.

HF2605-Olin (DFL)
Finance

Hallock Ice Arena funding provided.

HF2606-Olin (DFL)**Finance**

Thief River Falls pedestrian and bicycle pathways system funding provided.

HF2607-Olin (DFL)**Finance**

Roseau east diversion flood control project funding provided.

HF2608-Solberg (DFL)**Finance**

Grand Rapids fire and hazardous response team facility funding provided.

HF2609-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Crookston ice arena complex funding provided.

HF2610-Juhnke (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Anglers authorized to take fish with two lines.

HF2611-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Kandiyohi County; Grass Lake restoration funding provided.

HF2612-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Ridgewater Community and Technical College science lab renovation funding provided.

HF2613-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Sibley State Park facilities improvements funding provided.

HF2614-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Ridgewater Community and Technical College asset preservation funding provided.

HF2615-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Willmar wastewater treatment facility rehabilitation funding provided.

HF2616-Sertich (DFL)**Finance**

Chisholm street improvements funding provided.

HF2617-Bly (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Early childhood education programs teaching employment requirements modified.

HF2618-Welti (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School district career and technical education transition coordinators grants provided.

HF2619-Tschumper (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Birth certificate correction information provided.

HF2620-Clark (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Cord blood bank established statewide.

HF2621-Tschumper (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Well water testing required by the Department of Health for private well owners, renters or occupiers of property.

HF2622-Nornes (R)**E-12 Education**

Early childhood family education program teacher licensure requirements modified.

HF2623-Norton (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School district test results required to be provided by the state's testing contractor by the first week in May.

HF2624-Urdahl (R)**E-12 Education**

Teacher quality improvement task force established for effectively integrating secondary and postsecondary academic and career education.

HF2625-Slocum (DFL)**E-12 Education**

P-16 statewide education partnerships required to include legislators.

HF2626-Clark (DFL)**Finance**

Senior citizen identification card fee eliminated.

HF2627-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Public nuisance law requirement affecting evidentiary thresholds and numbers of triggering incidents for specific offenses changed.

HF2628-Norton (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Provisional driver's license requirements modified.

HF2629-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Unemployed worker direct assistance funds required.

HF2630-Brown (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales tax on purchase of certain school district vehicles eliminated.

HF2631-Urdahl (R)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Dairy investment matching grants provided.

HF2632-Urdahl (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Public service corporations required to share appraisal information with landowners.

HF2633-Brod (R)**Transportation Finance Division**

Driver's license acceptance requirements from another state or jurisdiction as valid form of identification modified.

HF2634-Doty (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

State employee sick leave donation provided.

HF2635-Olin (DFL)**Finance**

Northland Community and Technical College asset preservation funding provided.

HF2636-Anzelc (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Towns; recognition of service expenditures authorized.

HF2637-Slawik (DFL)**Finance**

Child care absent day requirements effective date modified.

HF2638-Jaros (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

MinnesotaCare definition of income for the non-farm self-employed modified.

HF2639-Gottwalt (R)**Health & Human Services**

Legend drugs prescribing provisions changed.

HF2640-Otremba (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Prenatal insurance waiting periods prohibited; pregnancy pre-existing condition eliminated; parenting grant and hotline established; alpha-fetoprotein and adoption information required; adoption tax credit established.

HF2641-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Canisteo Mine Outflow Project funding provided.

HF2642-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Itasca County; steel mill funding provided.

HF2643-Nelson (DFL)**Finance**

Hennepin Technical College funding provided.

HF2644-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Mora; senior center funding provided.

HF2645-Faust (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Minnesota National Guard Youth Challenge Program participation report required.

HF2646-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Hinckley Fire State Monument funding provided.

HF2647-Bly (DFL)**Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division**

Teach education and comprehension helps program grants administrative funding clarified.

HF2648-Bly (DFL)**Finance**

Northfield; public safety and regional emergency operations center funding provided.

HF2649-Brown (DFL)**Finance**

Kindergarten pupil unit count for all-day, every day kindergarten increased.

HF2650-Brown (DFL)**Finance**

Principals' Leadership Institute money appropriated.

HF2651-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Finance**

AgLan Center funding provided.

HF2652-Drazkowski (R)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

English designated as the official state language.

HF2653-Clark (DFL)**Finance**

Neighborhood land trust definition modified.

HF2654-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Iron Junction; sewer expansion funding provided.

HF2655-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Aurora; wastewater treatment facility, phase II funding provided.

HF2656-Lanning (R)**Finance**

Minnesota State University, Moorhead capital improvements funding provided.

HF2657-Bigham (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School boards required to seek information from prospective employees and the Board of Teaching about disciplinary actions against employees.

HF2658-Hosch (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 750, Rocori; account transfer authorized.

HF2659-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Virginia; Mining Haul Road economic development project funding provided.

HF2660-Urdahl (R)**Taxes**

Livestock farming operations items exempted.

HF2661-Severson (R)**Finance**

Sartell; Central Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails funding provided.

HF2662-Peterson, S. (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Metropolitan Council members staggered terms provided.

HF2663-Peterson, S. (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Schools required to use environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products; task force established.

HF2664-Koenen (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

New veterans home to be established and operated in Montevideo.

HF2665-McNamara (R)**Transportation Finance Division**

General obligation bonds authorized as additional revenue source for trunk highway funding; and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2666-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Gilbert wastewater treatment facility improvement funding provided.

HF2667-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Hoyt Lakes and White rail and infrastructure project funding provided.

HF2668-Otremba (DFL)**Finance**

Alexandria Technical College law enforcement center funding provided.

HF2669-McNamara (R)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

State government officials long-distance phone records approval provisions modified.

HF2670-Paulsen (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Child predators required to wear tracking and monitoring devices after release from prison, penalties prescribed.

HF2671-Urdahl (R)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Nursing facility payment rates required to recognize pension benefit costs.

HF2672-Urdahl (R)**Finance**

Annandale Tactical Training Center funding provided.

HF2673-Urdahl (R)**Finance**

Dassel elevated water tank funding provided.

HF2674-McNamara (R)**Finance**

Fracture-critical bridge replacement funding provided, sale of trunk highway or general obligation bonds authorized depending on adoption of a constitutional amendment.

HF2675-Urdahl (R)**Finance**

State park and recreation area acquisition funding provided.

HF2676-Mullery (DFL)**Finance**

Voluntary paid parental leave provided.

HF2677-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Faribault water reclamation facility construction funding provided.

HF2678-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf campus; Mott Hall renovation funding provided.

HF2679-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Ellendale water system improvements funding provided.

HF2680-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Medford wastewater and water system improvements funding provided.

HF2681-Dettmer (R)**Taxes**

Christmas trees grown for resale considered an intensive use and agricultural land relating to property taxes.

HF2682-Lillie (DFL)**Finance**

Ice arena operation school district levy authority increased.

HF2683-Otremba (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs Finance Division**

Minnesota Agriculture Education Leadership Council expiration date modified.

HF2684-Eken (DFL)**Finance**

Becker County Indian burial site acquisition funding provided.

HF2685-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Blooming Prairie sewer improvements funding provided.

HF2686-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota Correctional Facility, Faribault, phase 3 expansion funding provided.

HF2687-Westrom (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Local government requirements for use of certain non-conforming lots limited.

HF2688-Westrom (R)**Finance**

Elbow Lake infrastructure funding grant provided.

HF2689-Slawik (DFL)**Finance**

Child care assistance basic sliding fee waiting list reduction funding provided.

HF2690-Laine (DFL)**Finance**

Fridley; Springbrook Nature Center redevelopment funding provided.

HF2691-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud Regional Airport land acquisition funding provided.

HF2692-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud Civic Center expansion funding provided.

HF2693-Laine (DFL)**Finance**

Fridley; Northstar commuter train station funding provided.

HF2694-Doty (DFL)**Finance**

Little Falls; Pine Grove Zoo funding provided.

HF2695-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji State University property acquisition funding provided.

HF2696-Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Police departments reimbursed by Department of Corrections for cost of predatory offender community notification hearings.

HF2697-Johnson (DFL)**Finance**

Great River Road historic roadside properties development and restoration funding provided.

HF2698-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

Sartell; Central Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails grant provided.

HF2699-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji State University Sattgast Science Building addition funding provided.

HF2700-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji State University property demolition funding provided.

HF2701-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji State University asset preservation funding provided.

HF2702-Mullery (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Employee organization access to employees provided at certain meetings, tax treatment of employer expenditures related to opposing employee unionization efforts specified, and penalties imposed.

HF2703-Jaros (DFL)**Finance**

Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad scenic railway improvements funding provided.

HF2704-Dill (DFL)**Finance**

Vermilion Highlands Wildlife Management Area shooting sports facilities funding provided.

HF2705-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji State University science lab renovation funding provided.

HF2706-Doty (DFL)**Finance**

Camp Ripley military museum funding provided.

HF2707-Lenczewski (DFL)**Finance**

Bloomington; Old Cedar Avenue Bridge replacement funding provided.

HF2708-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 279, Osseo, grant provided to construct the Northwest Hennepin Family Center in Brooklyn Center.

HF2709-Demmer (R)**Finance**

Wind energy revenue payments to school districts restored.

HF2710-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

Correctional facilities statewide spending authorized.

HF2711-Slocum (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Health and auto insurance reimbursement required for emergency care provided by first responders.

HF2712-Kalin (DFL)**Finance**

Chisago County; dam safety modifications spending authorized.

HF2713-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji Regional Event Center spending authorized.

HF2714-Winkler (DFL)**Finance**

Perpich Center for Arts Education spending authorized.

HF2715-Magnus (R)**Finance**

Rock and Nobles counties rail line state loans forgiven or converted to grants.

HF2716-Bigham (DFL)**Finance**

Red Rock Corridor Transit Way funding provided.

HF2717-Kalin (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Controlled substance minimum fines offenses disbursement authorized to juvenile substance abuse court programs.

HF2718-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Publicly owned housing funding provided.

HF2719-Atkins (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Employee in position of authority and student sexual relations prohibited.

HF2720-Atkins (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Loitering prohibited near schools and places where children congregate.

HF2721-Dominguez (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Auto insurance and certain claims practices regulated.

HF2722-Cornish (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Electronic licensing system agents permitted to charge a higher fee to credit card users, and notification of higher fee to individuals required.

HF2723-Cornish (R)**Taxes**

Wells; disposition of certain tax increment revenues provided after decertification of a district.

HF2724-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud State University asset preservation funding provided.

HF2725-Hansen (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Public Employees Retirement Association police and fire fund annuity authorized for a divorced spouse of a deceased retiree who elected a single life annuity.

HF2726-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Angling license fees modified.

HF2727-Howes (R)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 113, Walker-Akeley, authorized to rectify 2007 property tax levy for taxes payable in 2008.

HF2728-Dill (DFL)**Finance**

Knife River-Larsmont sanitary district to the Duluth/North Shore sanitary district grant reappropriated.

HF2729-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Heritage trail funding provided.

HF2730-Doty (DFL)**Finance**

Camp Ripley training and exercise center funding provided.

HF2731-Hansen (DFL)**Finance**

Water and Soil Resources board statewide projects funding provided.

HF2732-Loeffler (DFL)**Finance**

Minneapolis; St. Anthony Parkway Bridge replacement funding provided.

HF2733-Mahoney (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; Keller and Phalen parks master plan funding provided.

HF2734-Clark (DFL)**Finance**

Neighborhood land trusts funding provided.

HF2735-Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Peace officer training in managing and policing citizens with mental and emotional problems funding provided.

HF2736-Mullery (DFL)**Finance**

Statewide landlord registry study provided, and report required.

HF2737-Anzelc (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Wetland bank credit provided under certain state-held conservation easements.

HF2738-Beard (R)**Finance**

Lower Minnesota Watershed District dredge material site projects funding provided.

HF2739-Cornish (R)**Finance**

Wells; historical Wells Depot renovation funding provided.

HF2740-Erickson (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Mille Lacs County; taking of white and albino deer prohibited.

HF2741-Solberg (DFL)**Finance**

Grand Rapids; Wastewater treatment facility reconstruction authorized.

HF2742-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota State Academies, Frechette Hall spending authorized.

HF2743-Kalin (DFL)**Finance**

Chisago County; Ojiketa Regional Park created.

HF2744-Greiling (DFL)**Finance**

State bond financed property sale proceeds distribution modified.

HF2745-Wagenius (DFL)**Finance**

Environment & Natural Resources trust fund repayment provided.

HF2746-Lesch (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Plastic bag recycling provided, civil penalties provided and rulemaking authorized.

HF2747-Simon (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Complementary and alternative health care practices modified.

HF2748-Liebling (DFL)**Finance**

Administrative services unit required to apportion the necessary amount to purchase medical professional liability insurance coverage and authorizing fees to be adjusted to compensate for the apportioned amount.

HF2749-Liebling (DFL)**Finance**

Olmsted County; nursing facilities reimbursement rates increased.

HF2750-Moe (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Ambulance service in the state trauma system transport criteria modified.

HF2751-Ruud (DFL)**Finance**

Kinship navigator program established for grandparents and relatives raising related children, grant provided.

HF2752-Ruud (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Kinship support program established.

HF2753-Rukavina (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

White Community Hospital District established and authorized to levy property taxes.

HF2754-Scalze (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Poultry and pork products containing arsenic additives sales prohibited to retail stores and restaurants.

HF2755-Lenczewski (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Physical therapy coverage required to include physical therapy for maintenance of health status for patients with progressive conditions.

HF2756-McFarlane (R)**Finance**

Tamarack Nature Center; Destination for Discovery funding provided.

HF2757-Hornstein (DFL)**Finance**

Imminent bridge collapse warning device required to be developed by the commissioner of transportation and report required.

HF2758-Hausman (DFL)**Finance**

Central Corridor Transit Way design and construction authorized.

HF2759-Kalin (DFL)**Finance**

Lindstrom; Trunk Highway 8 bridge replacement funding provided.

HF2760-Mahoney (DFL)**Finance**

Bioscience public infrastructure grants provided.

HF2761-Hausman (DFL)**Finance**

State museum of natural history funding provided.

**HF2762-Wardlow (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform,
Technology & Elections**

Teachers Retirement Association; service credit for prior Illinois teaching service purchase authorized.

HF2763-Gardner (DFL)**Taxes**

Anoka County; library governing bonding provision modified.

HF2764-Poppe (DFL)**Finance**

Austin; flood relief funding provided.

HF2765-Poppe (DFL)**Finance**

Austin; Austin Area Success Center funding provided.

HF2766-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud State University; integrated science and engineering lab design funding provided.

HF2767-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Northland Community and Technical College, East Grand Forks funding provided.

HF2768-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud State University; Brown Hall science renovation funding provided.

HF2769-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud Technical College; Allied Health Center design funding provided.

HF2770-Kahn (DFL)**Finance**

University Research Park project area funding provided.

HF2771-Lanning (R)**Finance**

Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Moorhead funding provided.

HF2772-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota State Academies asset preservation funding provided.

HF2773-Atkins (DFL)**Finance**

Inver Hills Community College funding provided.

HF2774-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

St. Cloud Technical College funding provided.

HF2775-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Rainy River Community College asset preservation funding provided.

HF2776-Norton (DFL)**Finance**

Olmsted County; new steam line from Olmsted Waste-to-Energy Facility to Rochester Community and Technical College Campus funding provided.

HF2777-Gardner (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Solid waste management tax revenue disposition modified.

HF2778-Poppe (DFL)**Finance**

Riverland Community College funding provided.

HF2779-Paulsen (R)**Finance**

Lifelong learning account program established, tax credits to employees and employers for contributions to lifelong learning accounts allowed.

HF2780-Jaros (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Duluth; food and beverage sales tax rate increase authorized; proceeds authorized for certain improvements.

HF2781-Jaros (DFL)**Taxes**

Disaster response vehicles exempted from registration tax and fees.

HF2782-Bigham (DFL)**E-12 Education**

K-12 athletic coaches required to undergo criminal history background check.

HF2783-Swails (DFL)**E-12 Education**

P-20 education partnership established.

HF2784-Mullery (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Public school students required to complete service learning hours as a condition of graduating from high school.

HF2785-Gardner (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Conflict of interest exception established for certain school contracts for professional and other services.

HF2786-Mullery (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Qualified rehabilitation consultant fees modified.

HF2787-Mullery (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Public Interest; certain private actions on behalf of one or more persons alleging unlawful business, commerce or trade practices provided.

HF2788-Anzelc (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Nashauk Public Utilities Commission membership increased from three to five members.

HF2789-Dill (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Reestablishment cost limit provisions amended.

HF2790-Eastlund (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Maximum bail increased for unconditional release of impaired driving defendants who have been taken into custody following arrest.

HF2791-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Kandiyohi County veterans home funding provided.

HF2792-Juhnke (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Baseball park proposals required.

HF2793-Murphy, M. (DFL)**Finance**

Duluth Entertainment Convention Center arena funding provided.

HF2794-Thao (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Crossbow hunting of bear and turkey allowed during regular firearms seasons.

HF2795-Tschumper (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Local government; Public entities may hold meetings or events after 6 p.m. on March 4, 2008.

HF2796-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Koochiching County renewable energy clean air project funding provided.

HF2797-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Wheeler Point community sanitary sewer collection and treatment system funding provided.

HF2798-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Northome sanitary sewer, water and storm sewer rehabilitation project funding provided.

HF2799-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Baudette water towers funding provided.

HF2800-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Transportation finance bill appropriating money for highway maintenance, local roads, emergency relief related to the I-35W bridge collapse, establishing a bridge improvement program; issuing bonds; and modifying motor fuel taxes.

HF2801-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Voyageurs Heritage Center and Voyageurs National Park Headquarters funding provided.

HF2802-Gardner (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Open burning of solid waste prohibited.

HF2803-Greiling (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Teachers retirement association coverage election authorized for a specified Minnesota State Colleges and Universities employee.

HF2804-Gardner (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Buckthorn eradication ordinances authorized.

HF2805-Mahoney (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Restricted plumber licenses effective dates modified.

HF2806-Brown (DFL)**Finance**

Albert Lea landfill remedial waste systems funding provided.

HF2807-Brown (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 242, Alden-Conger, funding provided for Alden Community Center.

HF2808-Brown (DFL)**Finance**

Blazing Star Trail segment funding provided.

HF2809-Brown (DFL)**Finance**

Rose Creek sewer systems upgrade funding provided.

HF2810-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji National Guard Training and Community Center roof repair funding provided.

HF2811-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Board of Accountancy governing provisions modified.

HF2812-Seifert (R)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 411, Balaton, account transfer authorized.

HF2813-Winkler (DFL)**Finance**

Metropolitan transportation projects state funding prioritization required for projects that have been awarded federal funding.

HF2814-Howes (R)**Finance**

Walker water main funding provided.

HF2815-Hilty (DFL)**Finance**

Moose Lake sex offender treatment program facilities phase 2 expansion funding provided.

HF2816-Morrow (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Nicollet County auditor-treasurer office made appointive.

HF2817-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Lafayette wastewater collection system improvements funding provided.

HF2818-Johnson (DFL)**Finance**

Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area snowmaking system funding provided.

HF2819-Johnson (DFL)**Finance**

Lower Afton Trail funding provided.

HF2820-Eastlund (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Safe cabs program matching-grant pilot program established to assist communities in providing safe transportation for intoxicated persons.

HF2821-Hansen (DFL)**Finance**

High resolution digital elevation data funding provided.

HF2822-Fritz (DFL)**Finance**

Trunk Highway 60 in Faribault expansion funding provided.

HF2823-Bigham (DFL)**Finance**

Dakota County restorative justice services funding provided.

HF2824-Kalin (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Comfort Lake - Forest Lake Watershed District classified as a watershed management organization.

HF2825-Atkins (DFL)**Finance**

Inver Grove Heights; Heritage Village Park funding provided.

HF2826-Gardner (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Buckthorn designated as a primary noxious weed, and municipal ordinances authorized.

HF2827-Welti (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

County historical society funding modified relating to cities of the first class.

HF2828-Howes (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Property owner authorized to obtain a cartway to obtain access from a navigable waterway to island property.

HF2829-Hornstein (DFL)
Finance

Minneapolis; Grand Rounds parkway improvements funding provided.

HF2830-Davnie (DFL)
Finance

Minneapolis; emergency operations center and regional fire training center funding provided.

HF2831-Davnie (DFL)
Finance

Minneapolis; Franklin LRT station and 46th St. station redevelopment area infrastructure improvements funding provided.

HF2832-Slawik (DFL)
Finance

Trunk Highway No. 5 Maplewood; preliminary engineering improvements funding provided.

HF2833-Slawik (DFL)
Finance

Trunk Highway No. 5 Maplewood; improvements feasibility study funding provided.

HF2834-Wollschlager (DFL)
Finance

Cannon River pedestrian bridge funding provided.

HF2835-Liebling (DFL)
Finance

Rochester; Mayo Civic Center Complex renovation and expansion funding provided.

HF2836-Haws (DFL)
Finance

Non-metro regional parks and trails system recommendations required, funding provided.

HF2837-Thao (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Optometrist practice and licensing provisions modified.

HF2838-Thao (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Optometrist disciplinary actions provided for specified conduct.

HF2839-Brynaert (DFL)
Finance

Mankato; performing arts theater and Southern Minnesota Women's Hockey Exposition Center design funding provided.

HF2840-Cornish (R)
Finance

Pemberton community center funding provided.

HF2841-Nornes (R)
Finance

Aquatic habitat acquisition funding provided.

HF2842-Ruud (DFL)
Finance

Eden Prairie; Camp Eden Wood improvement and expansion funding provided.

HF2843-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Presidential election; two electoral votes awarded to candidate with the highest nationwide vote total.

HF2844-Simon (DFL)
Finance

Southwest Transitway Corridor environmental impact statement and preliminary engineering funding provided.

HF2845-Ward (DFL)
Finance

Cuyuna State Recreation Area improvements funding provided.

HF2846-Greiling (DFL)
Finance

School district alternative facilities bonding eligibility standards modified.

HF2847-Laine (DFL)
Taxes

Fridley tax increment financing district authorized.

HF2848-Bly (DFL)
Finance

Mill Towns State Trail construction funding provided.

HF2849-Gottwalt (R)
Finance

Stearns County; Quarry Park and Nature Preserve land acquisition funding provided.

HF2850-Brown (DFL)
Taxes

Agricultural property tax classification extended to brothers and sisters.

HF2851-Solberg (DFL)
Finance

Grand Rapids; Southside Fire Hall funding provided.

HF2852-Hansen (DFL)
Taxes

Local government aid city aid base increased for specified cities.

HF2853-Bigham (DFL)
Finance

Trunk Highway No. 61 specific service signs installation required.

HF2854-Hansen (DFL)
Taxes

Local government aid city aid base increased for specified cities.

Thursday, Feb. 14

HF2855-Ward (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Public Employment Retirement Association disability benefit election changes permitted.

HF2856-Ward (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division

Passengers prohibited in the bed of a pickup truck.

HF2857-Ward (DFL)
Taxes

School district referendum market value tax base altered and seasonal recreational property taxation modified.

HF2858-Ward (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Fish-raising facilities excluded from certain licensing requirements.

HF2859-Paymar (DFL)
Finance

Department of Corrections system-wide asset preservation funding provided.

HF2860-Olin (DFL)
Finance

Independent School District No. 356, Lancaster, transition revenue adjusted.

HF2861-Olin (DFL)
Finance

Northland Community and Technical College, Thief River Falls, funding provided.

HF2862-Olin (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

State-owned land acquisition limited, real estate taxes payment required on purchased state land.

HF2863-Cornish (R)
Finance

Family substance abuse treatment services funding provided.

HF2864-Ward (DFL)
Finance

Brainerd-Baxter sewage treatment plant funding provided.

HF2865-Ward (DFL)
Finance

Brainerd downtown infrastructure improvements funding provided.

HF2866-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Voter registration application forms use authorized.

HF2867-Juhnke (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Farm unit conservation plan program created, state cost-share program required and task force created.

HF2868-Brown (DFL)
Finance

Independent School District No. 2134, United South Central, cooperative facilities grant provided.

HF2869-Ward (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Diesel truck idling reduction technology purchases grant program established.

HF2870-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division

Limited security interest created for co-signer of loan agreement to purchase motor vehicles.

HF2871-Dill (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Conservation angling license provided.

HF2872-Nelson (DFL)
Finance

North Hennepin Community College funding provided.

HF2873-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division

USDOT carrier numbers provisions modified governing requirement and use.

HF2874-Brod (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice

Citizenship and legal status verification required of offenders committed to custody, non-citizen inmates release to United States immigration and customs enforcement required.

HF2875-Fritz (DFL)
Finance

Minnesota State Academies, Pollard Hall funding provided.

HF2876-Tschumper (DFL)
Finance

Chatfield Brass Band Library funding provided.

HF2877-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice

Disarming a peace officer crime established.

HF2878-Bigham (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice

Careless driving resulting in death penalty provided, and revocation of violator's driver's license provided.

HF2879-Brynaert (DFL)
Finance

Greater Minnesota business development public infrastructure grant program funding provided.

HF2880-Moe (DFL)
Finance

Greater Minnesota development funding provided.

HF2881-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Mora; Spring Lake Trail funding provided.

HF2882-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Pine Technical College funding provided.

HF2883-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Mora; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2884-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Quamba; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2885-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Nashwauk; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2886-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Nashwauk; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2887-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Effie; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2888-Dean (R)**Finance**

Stillwater; flood control funding provided.

HF2889-Davnie (DFL)**Finance**

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District funding provided.

HF2890-Ruud (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Colorectal cancer screening for the uninsured provided.

HF2891-Ruth (R)**Finance**

Minnesota Wildlife Art Museum funding provided.

HF2892-Sailer (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota Job Skills Partnership programs modified.

HF2893-Greiling (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

School districts authorized to participate in the state employee health insurance plan.

HF2894-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Coleraine, Bovey, Taconite JWC funding provided to improve aerobic digesters.

HF2895-Lanning (R)**Finance**

Minnesota Sesquicentennial Commission funding provided for the celebration of Minnesota's 150th anniversary of statehood.

HF2896-Thissen (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

War veterans memorial referendum requirement removed.

HF2897-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Virginia; veterans memorial funding provided.

HF2898-Paymar (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Claim denials under aviation liability coverage regulated.

HF2899-Pelowski (DFL)**Finance**

Winona State University; Memorial Hall funding provided.

HF2900-Carlson (DFL)**Finance**

Hennepin County Medical Center outpatient clinic and health education facility funding provided.

HF2901-Doty (DFL)**Finance**

Motley; Tri-County Regional Services Center funding provided.

HF2902-Loeffler (DFL)**Finance**

Minneapolis; Lowry Avenue Bridge funding provided.

HF2903-Gardner (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Biomass definition extended with respect to renewable energy objectives, distributed energy resources and renewable energy resource planning, and Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee expiration date extended.

HF2904-Pelowski (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Natural disaster assistance procedures established for state agencies.

HF2905-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

George Washington State Forest; Kabetogama State Forest; Bridge replacement funding provided.

HF2906-Paymar (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Dangerous dogs regulating provisions changed.

HF2907-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Yellow Medicine County; appointive offices process provided.

HF2908-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Coleraine; downtown corridor redevelopment funding provided.

HF2909-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Itasca County; Balsam Lake dam repair funding provided.

HF2910-Solberg (DFL)**Finance**

Itasca County; North Central Technology Laboratories facility funding provided.

HF2911-Atkins (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Ticket sale and purchase offenses established.

HF2912-Cornish (R)**Finance**

Wells; street and infrastructure improvement funding provided.

HF2913-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Restricted plumber's license application time extended.

HF2914-Pelowski (DFL)**Finance**

La Crescent; Wagon Wheel Recreational and Commuter Trail funding provided.

HF2915-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

North Mankato; Caswell Park funding provided.

HF2916-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Crookston; ice arena complex funding provided.

HF2917-Pelowski (DFL)**Finance**

Root River State Trail funding provided.

HF2918-Kalin (DFL)**Finance**

Shafer; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2919-Kalin (DFL)**Finance**

Rush City; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2920-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Finance**

Developmental screening aid for children modified.

HF2921-Dill (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Angling and fish house license period modified.

HF2922-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Latex glove use prohibited in food and beverage service establishments.

HF2923-Drazkowski (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

State lands sales required to provide funding for transportation projects.

HF2924-Dettmer (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Washington County; tax-forfeited land bordering public land conveyance authorized.

HF2925-Nornes (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Otter Tail County; tax-forfeited lands bordering public water private sale authorized.

HF2926-Erickson (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Wetland conservation enforcement rulemaking modifications required.

HF2927-Eken (DFL)**Finance**

Red River Valley flood protection farmstead ring levees construction funding provided.

HF2928-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Anhydrous ammonia tanks authorized for farm use, refilling provided, and rules to provide safety and environmental safeguards authorized.

HF2929-Koenen (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota River Trail funding provided.

HF2930-Dill (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Bear hunting permit drawing provisions modified.

HF2931-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Finance**

Ortonville; Minnesota River Regional Park funding provided.

HF2932-Moe (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Cemetery fund use specified.

HF2933-Dittrich (DFL)**Finance**

Anoka-Ramsey Community College funding provided.

HF2934-Winkler (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Jury duty service deferral provided for nursing mothers.

HF2935-Ward (DFL)**Finance**

Nisswa; wastewater infrastructure funding provided.

HF2936-Westrom (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Sex offenders required to wear tracking and monitoring bracelets after release from prison, penalties prescribed.

HF2937-Brynaert (DFL)**Finance**

Open Door Health Center funding provided.

HF2938-Mahoney (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; city bond obligation funding provided.

HF2939-Hosch (DFL)
Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division
MnSCU board policy on credit requirements clarified.

HF2940-Hortman (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Older vehicle damages disclosure provided.

HF2941-Hausman (DFL)
Finance
University of Minnesota funding provided.

HF2942-Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Livestock investment grant program created and money appropriated.

HF2943-Madore (DFL)
Finance
Transit implementation plan required to meet 80 percent of transit needs in Greater Minnesota by 2015, annual assessment of ADA paratransit ridership needs in metropolitan area required, and annual transit report required.

HF2944-Kohls (R)
Finance
Carver County; Lake Waconia Regional Park funding provided.

HF2945-Bigham (DFL)
Finance
Retired veteran license plates authorized.

HF2946-Hansen (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Strategic tree planting inclusion mandated as eligible for direct expenditures as energy conservation improvement.

HF2947-Hilty (DFL)
Finance
Moose Lake south substation expansion project funding provided.

HF2948-Mahoney (DFL)
Finance
St. Paul RiverCentre loan repayment forgiven.

HF2949-Atkins (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Salvia divinorum added to schedule IV of the controlled substance schedules.

HF2950-Murphy, M. (DFL)
Finance
Midway Township sewer reconstruction funding provided.

HF2951-Urdahl (R)
E-12 Education
Student participation in school safety drills required.

HF2952-Urdahl (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Fishing club contest alternative annual fee established.

HF2953-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Litchfield wastewater treatment facility improvements funding provided.

HF2954-Anderson, B. (R)
Finance
Wright County; Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park land acquisition grant provided.

HF2955-Simon (DFL)
E-12 Education
School background check requirements modified.

HF2956-Murphy, M. (DFL)
Finance
Northshore Express Inter-City Passenger Rail funding provided.

HF2957-Wagenius (DFL)
Finance
Beneficial use of wastewater demonstration projects grants provided.

HF2958-Erickson (R)
Finance
Morrison County; Sullivan Lake Dam replacement funding provided.

HF2959-Johnson (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Broadband service mapping project and inventory funding provided.

HF2960-Olin (DFL)
Finance
Hallock water tower funding provided.

HF2961-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Minnesota State Anthem Commission established.

HF2962-Olin (DFL)
Finance
Greenbush water treatment facility funding provided.

HF2963-Hansen (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Lake Superior ballast water discharge regulation established; water exchange, discharge and treatment standards adopted; and civil penalties imposed.

HF2964-Hilstrom (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Horse racing; purse set-aside and breeder's fund revenue sharing provided, and simulcasting restriction modified.

HF2965-Gottwalt (R)
Transportation Finance Division
Driver's license photographs required to show full head and face.

HF2966-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
State hospitals and institutions and county social service agencies authorized to operate vehicles exempt from payment of registration tax and fees.

HF2967-Hortman (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Trailer brake motor vehicle weight limits modified, and penalties imposed for forging or possessing false commercial motor vehicle inspection decals.

HF2968-Ward (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Joey's Law; alcohol-restricted driver's licenses distinguishing color and markings specified.

HF2969-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Motor vehicle carrier weight limits violation civil penalties provided.

HF2970-Drazkowski (R)
Transportation Finance Division
Motorists required to move to far left of roadway before passing road maintenance workers.

HF2971-Juhnke (DFL)
Finance
Wind energy conversion system aggregation program and account established.

HF2972-Mahoney (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Technology, Inc. renamed Enterprise Minnesota, Inc. and related provisions updated.

HF2973-Dittrich (DFL)
Finance
Permanent school fund subtraction eliminated, education funding simplified and permanent school fund technology revenue dedicated.

HF2974-Dittrich (DFL)
E-12 Education
School trust land citizen oversight committee provided.

HF2975-Dittrich (DFL)
Finance
Permanent school fund subtraction eliminated.

HF2976-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Finance
Child care assistance reimbursement rates modified.

HF2977-Knuth (DFL)
Finance
School district pension subtraction repealed.

HF2978-Morgan (DFL)
Finance
Education finance; basic formula allowance increased, special education revenue proration eliminated, special education funding increased and referendum ballot language modified.

HF2979-Benson (DFL)
Finance
School district location equity revenue study required.

HF2980-Benson (DFL)
Finance
School facilities formulas modified, additional districts qualified for alternative facilities revenue, and deferred maintenance revenue and leased facilities levy increased.

HF2981-Carlson (DFL)
Finance
Intermediate school districts authorized to borrow in anticipation of revenue payments.

HF2982-Bly (DFL)
E-12 Education
Alternative learning centers and charter schools five-year pilot program established to identify systemic improvement measures to best serve eligible students.

HF2983-Peterson, S. (DFL)
E-12 Education
Office of Early Childhood Education established.

HF2984-Slawik (DFL)
E-12 Education
School-age care program modified.

HF2985-Dettmer (R)
Finance
School district military pay salary differential assistance provided.

HF2986-Kahn (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Humanities Center grant provided.

HF2987-Juhnke (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Biodiesel definition modified, minimum content increased, tiered content goal created and B20 panel established.

HF2988-Brod (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Towns authorized to refund surplus revenues upon removal of a subordinate service district.

HF2989-Koenen (DFL)
Taxes
Military pensions individual income tax subtraction created.

HF2990-Kohls (R)
Taxes
Motor vehicle sales tax exemption provided for vehicles purchased outside of the United States by active military personnel.

HF2991-Simon (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Safe at Home program provisions modified.

HF2992-Juhnke (DFL)
Finance
Little Crow Transit Way funding provided.

HF2993-Thissen (DFL)
Finance
Minneapolis forensic crime lab funding provided.

HF2994-Anzelc (DFL)
Finance
Big Fork sewer project funding provided.

HF2995-Kalin (DFL)
Finance
Amador Township wastewater infrastructure grant provided.

HF2996-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Drug offense judgment deferrals authorized, parole and corrections provisions modified.

HF2997-Buesgens (R)
Commerce & Labor
Public employment contracts financial parameters established.

HF2998-Koenen (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Free lifetime state park permits authorized for totally and permanently disabled veterans.

HF2999-Haws (DFL)
Finance
St. Cloud National Guard Training and Community Center roof replacement funding provided.

HF3000-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Statewide public safety radio system financing technical correction provided.

HF3001-Moe (DFL)
Finance
Cass Lake wastewater infrastructure grant provided.

HF3002-Moe (DFL)
Finance
State trail acquisition, rehabilitation and repair funding provided.

HF3003-Bly (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Dan Patch commuter rail line planning and development restrictions repealed.

HF3004-Dittrich (DFL)
Finance
Anoka-Ramsey Community College phase 2 renovation funding provided.

HF3005-Gardner (DFL)
Finance
Groundwater monitoring wells installation funding provided.

HF3006-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Home rule charter jurisdictions procedures established relating to ranked-choice voting.

HF3007-Simon (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Juveniles under age 16 prohibited from waiving right to counsel during custodial interrogations, except if waiver is made by juvenile's attorney or parent.

HF3008-Slocum (DFL)
Finance
Fort Snelling revitalization funding provided.

HF3009-Morrow (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treatment provided.

HF3010-Kohls (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Immigration law enforcement non-cooperation ordinances and policies prohibited, and data use authorized.

HF3011-Ward (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Regional treatment center or state-operated nursing home relocation authorization required.

HF3012-Ward (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Foster and residential care placement provisions modified.

HF3013-Norton (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Plasma protein treatments health insurance coverage required.

HF3014-Hosch (DFL)
Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division
Nurses loan forgiveness program clarified.

HF3015-Erickson (R)
Finance
Nursing facilities rate increase provided for facilities in Wright, Mille Lacs and Rice counties.

HF3016-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Medical assistance payment authorized for services provided by more than one home care or hospice agency.

HF3017-Tschumper (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Ethanol plant exemption removed from environmental impact statement requirements.

MEET & GREET



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher shakes Gov. Tim Pawlenty's hand after his State of the State address Feb. 13.

Gas tax increase seen as palatable

Polltakers weigh in on medical marijuana, Vikings' stadium

During the 2007 Minnesota State Fair, 6,678 fairgoers took the poll conducted by nonpartisan House Public Information Services. It is an informal, unscientific survey on issues discussed in prior legislative sessions and may again be topics of discussion.

1. Should the fine for moving traffic violations be doubled if the driver is using a cell phone at the time of the infraction?

Yes	66.6%	(4,419)
No	25.7%	(1,709)
Undecided/No Opinion	7.6%	(502)

2. Would you be willing to pay an extra 10 cents per gallon for gas if all the money goes toward state road and bridge improvements?

Yes	58.3%	(3,873)
No	33.5%	(2,226)
Undecided/No Opinion	8.2%	(543)

3. Do you support legislation that would prohibit people from suing food manufacturers and vendors for weight gain as a result of consuming certain foods?

Yes	68.6%	(4,547)
No	24.3%	(1,607)
Undecided/No Opinion	7.1%	(471)

4. On Veterans Day, should employers be required to give veterans a paid day off?

Yes	45.8%	(3,042)
No	39.5%	(2,622)
Undecided/No Opinion	14.6%	(971)

5. Do you support a proposal to amend the state constitution to raise the state's sales tax by three-eighths of 1 percent and dedicate the money to environment and arts funding?

Yes	41.7%	(2,762)
No	48.7%	(3,223)
Undecided/No Opinion	9.6%	(634)

6. Should the state allow for medical uses of marijuana?

Yes	58.0%	(3,845)
No	30.3%	(2,007)
Undecided/No Opinion	11.7%	(777)

7. Should the state be required to ensure affordable, comprehensive health care for all Minnesotans?

Yes	70.7%	(4,685)
No	22.2%	(1,469)
Undecided/No Opinion	7.1%	(468)

8. Should smoking be prohibited within 50 feet of an entrance to public buildings?

Yes	70.2%	(4,656)
No	24.7%	(1,642)
Undecided/No Opinion	5.1%	(338)

9. In 2008, should the state bond for \$260 million to restore and expand the State Capitol, which opened in 1905?

Yes	45.3%	(2,994)
No	30.6%	(2,026)
Undecided/No Opinion	24.1%	(1,596)

10. Should grants be made to public school districts to provide locally grown food as part of the school lunch program?

Yes	61.3%	(4,062)
No	26.6%	(1,762)
Undecided/No Opinion	12.1%	(803)

11. Minnesota currently provides funding for half-day kindergarten. Should funding be increased to provide for full-day kindergarten, if a district chooses to offer this?

Yes	67.1%	(4,447)
No	25.2%	(1,671)
Undecided/No Opinion	7.7%	(513)

12. Should public financing be used to help fund a new football stadium to house the Minnesota Vikings?

Yes	13.0%	(862)
No	81.4%	(5,401)
Undecided/No Opinion	5.7%	(376)

13. Should liquor stores and car dealers be permitted to open on Sundays?

Yes	57.6%	(3,819)
No	33.9%	(2,243)
Undecided/No Opinion	8.6%	(570)

14. Invented in Faribault in 1926, should the Tilt-A-Whirl be designated the State Amusement Ride?

Yes	47.3%	(3,123)
No	21.5%	(1,421)
Undecided/No Opinion	31.2%	(2,065)

LATE ACTION

Dedicated funding bill passed

It's been a source of contention and debate at the Legislature for years, and now voters will have their chance to weigh in on the issue of dedicated funding for the environment and the arts.

HF2285, sponsored by House Majority Leader Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm) and Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls), was approved 85-46 by the House and then 46-16 by the Senate Feb. 14. If approved by a majority of voters in the Nov. 4 general election, the measure would increase the state's sales tax by three-eighths of 1 percent and constitutionally dedicate the money to conservation and cultural programs.

The money, approximately \$276 million per year, would be divvied up as follows:

- 33 percent (\$91.1 million) to protect fish and wildlife habitat;
- 33 percent (\$91.1 million) to clean up state waters, including 5 percent for sustainable drinking water;



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Kevin Ausland, a member of Minnesota Sportsmen for Change, welcomes back members Feb. 12 for the 2008 session, and encourages quick passage of a bill that could ultimately provide dedicated arts and environment funding.

- 19.75 percent (\$54.5 million) for arts and cultural heritage; and
- 14.75 percent (\$39.3 million) for parks and trails.

During a brief floor debate, the bill drew both criticism and praise from members on both sides of the aisle.

House Minority Leader Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) denounced the idea of raising

taxes amid a faltering economy and a projected budget deficit. He characterized the bill as part of a "primal scream of tax increases" being proposed by the DFL majority.

Other House members, including Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), refused to support the bill on the grounds that it set a potentially dangerous precedent of budgeting through the constitution. Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan), meanwhile, predicted that voters would reject the measure anyway.

Those who spoke out in favor of the bill included Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) and Sertich, both of whom noted that environmental and cultural heritage funding has withered in recent years.

The bill, which has been around in some form or another for nearly a decade, made some headway in the closing weeks of the 2007 session, but was ultimately not passed before the House and Senate adjourned. It was fast-tracked this year in the hopes that early passage would give supporters adequate time to drum up support for the measure before Election Day.

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: MARGARET ANDERSON KELLIHER
MAJORITY LEADER: ANTHONY "TONY" SERTICH
MINORITY LEADER: MARTY SEIFERT

MINNESOTA INDEX

Session 2008

Number of legislative days in a biennium	120
Number available for this year	45
Legislative days used in 2006, the last bonding year	46
In 2004	52
In 2002	56
Days before constitutional deadline in which members adjourned in 2006	1
Days from when the Legislature adjourned in 2007 to the first day of the 2008 session	267
Days between the start of session and Election Day, Nov. 4	266
Date by which members must have their work complete	May 19
Number of new House members since the end of last regular session	1
(Steve Drazkowski)	
DFL House members	85
Republican House members	48
Independent Republican House members	1
Seat advantage for Republicans at start of 2006 session	68-66
Members having announced that this will be their final session	4
(Finstad, Kranz, Ozment, Walker)	
Bonding request submitted Jan. 14 by Gov. Tim Pawlenty (in billions)	\$1.09
Millions that are proposed in general obligation bonding	\$965
Percent of bonding request that are for statewide programs	43.2
Percent in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area	29.8
Percent in Greater Minnesota	27
Millions in 2006 bonding law	\$999.98
Amount from general obligation bonds, in millions	\$948.64
Members in each body that must pass a bonding bill, as percent	60
Percent of each body needed to override any gubernatorial veto	66.67
Based on the November forecast, anticipated state General Fund shortfall at the end of the 2008-09 biennium, in millions	\$373
House bills introduced during the 2007 regular session	2,552
Senate bills	2,363
House bills introduced in 2006, the last bonding year	1,661
Senate bills	1,478
House bills introduced on the first day of session	302
In 2006	515

— M. Cook

Sources: House Public Information Services, House Chief Clerk's Office, Legislative Reference Library, Office of the Governor, Department of Finance.

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