

STATE ISSUES FROM SANDS

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News from the Hill...

On Tuesday, February 19, Major General Dardis gave his State of the National Guard. He recognized several service men and their families in the Iowa Chamber and exemplified the outstanding work the men and women have accomplished over seas as well as here at home. We were also reminded of the important work our Iowa National Guard soldiers accomplish during times of natural disasters and emergencies throughout the Midwest.

Smoking Through the House...

On Tuesday, the Iowa House of Representatives passed [House File 2212](#) banning smoking in most public and some private locations throughout the state of Iowa. Although the bill must now pass the Senate, the question this raises is whether or not we as legislators have reached far beyond our boundaries and have begun taking away rather than protecting the liberties and freedoms of Iowans.

Along with restaurants and bars throughout Iowa, smoking will be banned from all places of employment including farms, small businesses, and all enclosed locations. However, the bill as it passed out the House exempts casinos from this ban because they are licensed differently under the Iowa code. The bill requires "No Smoking" signage in all enclosed areas, even including tractors, combines, and farm pickups listing the telephone number and Internet site for reporting complaints. These signs must be visible from the exterior of the vehicle and all public places. If this bill passes out of the Senate, the legislators of Iowa are restricting private property rights removing the right to smoke on one's own business property as well as everyone else on or within 10 feet of the property punishable by fines up to \$500.

I opposed this bill on Tuesday evening with a No vote and will do the same if the bill returns.

Ethanol Pipeline Feasibility...

On Tuesday, February 19, Magellan Midstream Partners, L.P. and Buckeye Partners L.P. announced they have begun assessing the feasibility of construction a pipeline to move ethanol from Midwest states where it is produced to distribution sites in Northeastern states. The pipelines proposed would cost in excess \$3 billion to construct and move 10-million gallons of ethanol a day, more than enough to meet the growing demand in the

Northeast. These pipelines would reduce the shipping costs of transporting the fuel by current rail options by 10 to 15 cents a gallon. Ethanol would be pumped from states including Iowa, Illinois, South Dakota, and Minnesota to markets in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York Harbor.

The Cost of Democrat's Health Care Plan...

On Tuesday, the cost of the health insurance mandate bill proposed by legislative Democrats became very clear. In his talk, John Shiels, a consultant with the Lewin Group, went over the analysis and laid out what they believed would be covered by a state plan and what the cost would be to individuals and families with the plan. Shiels told the Des Moines Register the total cost of full implementation of the mandate would be \$550 million *annually*. The Lewin Group's assumptions are based on the state providing coverage for 285,000 uninsured Iowans. Shiels also stated that implementing the individual mandate would increase costs to the health care industry up to 3 percent.

Regulating Water Quality...

On Wednesday, February 20, the House Environmental Protection Committee debated House Study Bill 615. A council, which would be created within the Governor's office, would include certain state agency heads with authority over water quality related programs as well as water quality experts from Regent institutions. The legislation, HSB 615, broadly specifies the duties of the Council and specifically emphasizes that the body should oversee the protection of surface water and seek improvements in water quality.

The debate focused on whether the legislation should create coordinating and facilitating roles for the two state agencies primarily involved in water quality (the DNR and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship), or whether it should include extensive new powers and authorities for the state agencies, specifically the DNR, as specified in the original bill draft. An amendment was adopted specifying certain clauses within the bill, and the bill then passed unanimously out of committee.

For more information on these and other bills: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/>

Until next time,
Tom Sands

Committee Assignments

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