



MHP Capitol Update

Volume 2, Issue 19 May 14, 2007



Capitol Notes

One Week and Counting

The end tax picture became a little clearer last week when the House and Senate passed a stand-alone bill that increases income taxes to fund property tax relief. Although we anticipate the governor to veto the stand-alone bill, this move allows the tax conference committee to put together an omnibus tax bill that has a fair chance of being passed into law. Prior to this happening, advocates were concerned that the income tax increase would threaten the passage of the omnibus tax bill. We also feared that a new bill version might be slimmed down and not include ancillary provisions like the 4d and construction sales tax exemption changes. This is the last week of session, so stay tuned—we have seven more days to work on conferees.

The final play on the resurrected jobs and economic development funding bill will occur quickly and, most likely, behind the scenes. The governor's veto message indicated that the bill was over budget by \$52 million and contained some policy provisions that he could not support. The good news is that there was no mention of problems with housing allocations, which came in just a few million dollars above the administration's recommendations. We expect that more money will be allocated to the bill to fix the funding problem, but that is not a given. If no more funding is provided for the jobs and economic development omnibus bill, some cuts within the legislation will need to be made to balance the numbers. This could mean some housing appropriations are cut.

We encourage you to tell your legislators and the conference committee members (listed below) to support the housing funding levels contained in the conference committee report on SF 2089. A short hand written note, a phone call to a staff person, or an email with this message contained in the subject line will assist us in holding on to our hard fought efforts to increase affordable housing appropriations to the highest level in over a decade.

Leadership		
Senator Pogemiller	651-296-7809	sen.larry.pogemiller@senate.mn
Senator Tarryl Clark	651-296-6455	www.senate.mn/senatorclarkemail
Senator Dick Cohen	651-296-5931	www.senate.mn/senatorcohenemail
Representative Tony Sertich	651-296-0172	rep.tony.sertich@house.mn
Representative Margaret Anderson Kelliher	651-296-0171	rep.margaret.kelliher@house.mn

Jobs and Economic Development Finance Bill Committee Members		
Senate Conferees		
Senator David Tomassoni	651-296-8017	sen.david.tomassoni@senate.mn
Senator Dan Sparks	651-296-9248	sen.dan.sparks@senate.mn
Senator Linda Scheid	651-296-8869	www.senate.mn/senatorscheidemail
Senator Amy Koch	651-296-5981	sen.amy.koch@senate.mn
Senator James Metzen	651-296-4370	sen.jim.metzen@senate.mn
House Conferees		
Representative Tom Rukavina	651-296-0170	rep.tom.rukavina@house.mn
Representative Mary Murphy	651-296-2676	rep.mary.murphy@house.mn
Representative Karen Clark	651-296-0294	rep.karen.clark@house.mn

Representative Tim Mahoney	651-296-4277	rep.tim.mahoney@house.mn
Representative Bob Gunther	651-296-3240	rep.bob.gunther@house.mn

[Click here to locate your own state Representative.](#)

Homeless Support Services Hanging On for a Bumpy Ride

It's no joke that some people at the Capitol refer to the Health and Human Services Committee as "Hell and Human Sacrifice." The countless meeting hours and a wide range of issues covered by this committee make it, along with the tax committee, one of the most difficult to track. As we reported last week, this committee is \$200 million over the governor's recommended spending and has \$52 million in fiscal tails into the 2010-1011 biennium. The total HHS bill came in at about \$10 billion, or one-third of all the state government's spending. Even if additional funds are found in the global agreement (yet to be reached by leadership), expect to see reductions in this funding amount. To ensure adequate funding for homeless support services, make sure to call, or write, the HHS conferees (below) and your local legislators this week.

Health and Human Services Bill Committee Members		
Senate Conferees		
Senator Linda Berglin	651-296-4261	www.senate.mn/senatorberglinemail
Senator John Doll	651-296-5975	sen.john.doll@senate.mn
Senator Ann Lynch	651-296-4848	sen.ann.lynch@senate.mn
Senator Tony Lourey	651-296-0293	sen.tony.lourey@senate.mn
Senator Yvonne Prettner Solon	651-296-4188	sen.yvonne.prettner.solon@senate.mn
Senator Paul Koering	651-296-4875	sen.paul.koering@sentate.mn
House Conferees		
Representative Tom Huntley	651-296-2228	rep.thomas.huntley@house.mn
Representative Paul Thissen	651-296-5375	rep.paul.thissen@house.mn
Representative Karen Clark	651-296-0294	rep.karen.clark@house.mn
Representative Neva Walker	651-296-7152	rep.neva.walker@house.mn
Representative Larry Hosch	651-296-4373	rep.larry.hosch@house.mn
Representative Jim Abeler	651-296-1729	rep.jim.abeler@house.mn

Manufactured Housing Pulls another Rabbit Out of the Hat

S.F.1196 establishes a self-funded relocation account to reimburse homeowners for moving expenses when a manufactured home park closes. The relocation account will be funded by a \$12 annual fee paid by homeowners as well as contributions from park owners who close their facilities. This has been a very contentious piece of—it is the first time in over two decades that homeowners and park owners have worked collaboratively to pass mutually beneficial legislation. The complexities of this important policy change required the bill to go through **two Senate policy committees twice**. As a result, the bill failed to meet committee deadlines and, to stay alive, was required to gain approval from the Senate Rules Committee. We are pleased to report that it was approved by the Rules Committee last week and the bill will make its final stop in the Finance Committee today. The House companion, H.F.1205, awaits action on the House floor.

Bits and Bytes

Saying Thanks Means a Lot

As with anyone, legislators enjoy a gracious, and public, thank you note or nod for their housing support efforts. This is true particularly when it comes from a voting constituent. Don't forget to include this as part of your summer work plan.

Late in the initial budget setting process, a number of the freshman on the House Housing Committee really went to bat with leadership to increase funding and were successful. Those of us around the Capitol expressed our appreciation, but it was the calls from back home that really made the difference when House leadership increased base budgets and one-time allocations for the final jobs and economic development bill. The House Housing Committee freshmen would make a great place to start your thank you notes.

Post Session Wrap Ups – Start Planning Now

MHP will provide you with a quick season synopsis once the session is over. This will be followed by a more detailed session wrap-up, which will include policy items that will be active into the summer. We encourage advocates to contact legislators to meet with them to review this session's housing initiatives, or attend public forums where legislators are speaking about this year's legislative accomplishments and query them on housing. At the least, ask them to forward you information regarding housing initiatives. MHP has already been contacted by legislative staff to provide session wrap-up assistance on housing related items. Engaging legislators in the off-season creates more supporters for future sessions. As we noted all spring, housing has strong supporters that are few in number. Increasing our allies is crucial to continued success.

Congratulations to APAC!

All Parks Alliance for Change (APAC) will be receiving a Social Justice Award from the Headwater's Foundation at their tenth annual Allies for Justice Awards Celebration on May 22, 2007. The award is given to two organizations every year in recognition of their history of activism and leadership in transforming systems of injustice. APAC's 25 years of work has improved the lives of thousands of Minnesotan families who live in manufactured home parks, the largest source of affordable housing in the state.

One Final Prediction!

Our prediction for the week is that session will end on time, but by a hair splitting second.

Distributed weekly during the legislative session and periodically outside of session, the MHP Capitol Update provides information about bill introductions, committee hearings, policy analysis, and political chatter in St. Paul. MHP Capitol Update is published by Minnesota Housing Partnership, and content is provided by MHP's lobbying team, Cindy Jepson and Julian Loscalzo. To share ideas for future issues, to ask questions, or to unsubscribe, please contact Barb Jacobs at bjacobs@mhponline.org or 651-649-1710 ext. 117.

Minnesota Housing Partnership's mission is to promote homes for all Minnesotans and to assist Minnesota communities in the creation and preservation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people.