



Legislative Update

Assemblywoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick

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Assembly District 1

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I'm on the Web!

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Dear Friend,

This is the fourth in a series of email newsletters designed to keep you updated about key topics under consideration at the Legislature. If you DO NOT want to receive these newsletters, please reply to this message and I'll be happy to remove you from the list.

Last week, the Nevada Legislature reached a major deadline: passage of legislation out of its house of origin. These bills now go to the other house for consideration.

Some bills were sent to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee before final passage, including bills to establish a business portal, reform our state energy policy and set state priorities with greater accountability.

While our economic crisis and unprecedented shortfalls are the focus of this session, we are also committed to looking to the future—to making fundamental changes in the way our state operates to ensure we never find ourselves in these dire economic straits again, as well as to take steps to improve the quality of life for all Nevadans.

Among the legislation passed by the Assembly were measures to reform our budget process to maximize efficiency and accountability, to address our foreclosure crisis, to spur the development of renewable energy to help create new jobs, and to provide new safeguards to patients in response to the Hepatitis C exposure crisis in Southern Nevada last year.

Here are just a few of the bills approved by the Assembly in the last few weeks:

ADDRESSING THE FORECLOSURE CRISIS

- AB 140 would protect renters of foreclosed homes by requiring banks and landlords to give renters notice if the home they live in is about to be foreclosed.
- AB 151 would require lenders to disclose in plain terms certain provisions of nontraditional loans, including potential increases to monthly payments.
- AB 152 would require additional licensing of foreclosure consultants and loan modification consultants to prevent foreclosure scams.

CREATING GREEN JOBS BY TAPPING INTO NEVADA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL

- AB 186 would pave the way for additional small-scale renewable energy systems by revising the definition of "public utility" and "utility."
- AB 192 would require government agencies to develop a plan and timeline to meet energy efficiency standards.
- AB 387 would require the Public Utilities Commission to create geographic zones where renewable energy could be generated and to consider requests for placing transmission lines in those areas. Much of Nevada's renewable energy potential is in remote parts of the state, but there is no way to transport energy from the areas to the homes and businesses around Nevada that need it. The bill would also increase the renewable energy portfolio standard to 25 percent by 2025.
- AB 402 would set criteria that allows for greater public input in energy utility resource planning hearings. Many important decisions that affect our air, land and water are made in these hearings and Nevadans will benefit from a more open process.
- AJR 10 asks Congress to set aside land for renewable energy projects in Nevada to speed up development of renewable energy in Nevada.

STRENGTHENING PATIENT SAFETY STANDARDS IN RESPONSE TO THE HEPATITIS C OUTBREAK IN LAS VEGAS

- AB 10 would prohibit discrimination against nurses that blow the whistle on unsafe medical practices.
- AB 112 would provide for the establishment of an emergency team to coordinate a response to a public health crisis declared by the Governor.
- AB 206 would require surgery centers to better report sentinel events. It would also allow the Department of Health and Human Services to obtain medical records in investigations into unsafe medical practices, such as the Hepatitis C outbreak last year.

MAXIMIZING TAXPAYER DOLLARS BY REFORMING THE STATE BUDGET

- AB 135 would improve fiscal accountability by requiring the State Treasurer to review and the State Board of Finance to approve or reject certain state financial obligations prior to the state incurring debt obligations that would require state payments of \$5 million or more.

- AB 165 would create a new state budget stabilization fund, a forced savings account for our state to provide a better cushion in difficult financial times such as the current recession.
- AB 193 would require several state agencies to provide the Legislature's Interim Finance Committee quarterly reports on how much they were due in taxes versus how much they actually collected so that the state can better track taxes owed.
- AB 492 would improve accountability and transparency in the granting of exemptions and abatements.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

- AB 187 would create a specialized Veterans Court for veterans facing criminal charges. The Veterans Court would be modeled after successful courts created for people with mental health or substance abuse problems.

OTHER QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

- AB 162 would require health insurance coverage for screening and treatment of autism.
- AB 233 would increase the penalties for stealing metals such as copper and aluminum from construction sites, street lights and even from homes.
- AB 493 would track investment of the state's Public Employees' Retirement System into Iranian businesses that enhance Iran's ability to develop the country's oil resources.
- AB 521 would expand treatment for firefighters who develop cancer after being exposed to carcinogens on the job. It also would require regular cancer screenings for firefighters.

Legislation enabling Nevada to receive \$286 million in unemployment funds from the federal recovery package (AB 469) has been approved by both houses and signed by the Governor.

Contact Me

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you need help accessing legislative information or would like to provide input on a specific issue. My office number in Carson City is 775-684-8509, and my legislative email is mkirkpatrick@asm.state.nv.us.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Kirkpatrick