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**Minnesota
House of
Representatives**
Kurt Zellers, Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Laws Effective July 1, 2011

All but one of the major appropriation bills that would have taken effect July 1, 2011, were vetoed by the governor. However, several bills passed during the 2011 legislative session will take effect on that date. The asterisk following the bill number denotes the language that became law. By early July, summaries of all laws passed by the 2011 Legislature during its regular session will be available online from nonpartisan House Public Information Services at www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/Newlaws2011-0.asp.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture funding law includes final ethanol payments

More than \$13.7 million in expected final ethanol producer payments will be distributed over the next year, ending a 1980s program to incentivize farmers to grow corn for biofuel, according to a new law.

The new law also authorizes funding for research and innovation for switching from corn to cellulosic materials, such as perennial plants, in order to produce bioenergy.

The omnibus agriculture and rural development finance law, sponsored by Rep. Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake) and Sen. Doug Magnus (R-Slayton), is the only major appropriation bill to receive the governor's approval during the regular session.

The new law will allocate nearly \$79 million during the next two years to fund the Department of Agriculture, the Board of Animal Health and the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute.

Two year appropriations to protect agricultural investments include:

- \$776,000 to fund staff for the Agricultural Chemical Response and Reimbursement Program, which is funded through a fertilizer and pesticide surcharge and used to clean-up accidental spills;
- \$150,000 to compensate farmers for livestock killed or injured by a gray wolf, plus the same amount to compensate them for crop damages caused by elk; and
- a one-time \$490,000 appropriation to catch up with an estimated 40 percent backlog of food handling inspections at convenience stores, grocers and other retail outlets.

Grant programs are funded to develop and market locally grown products for retail sale. Annual cost-share payments will also be available to those who seek certification status as an organic farmer.

Other grant appropriations will support ongoing efforts of the dairy industry, Northern Crops Institute, Livestock Breeders Association, Minnesota Poultry Association and other agriculture-related organizations.

The Board of Animal Health, which manages prevention and eradication of animal disease outbreaks such as chronic wasting disease or bovine tuberculosis, will receive \$4.8 million each year during the next biennium.

AURI is being funded at \$2.6 million each of the next two years. The institute is an agricultural research organization that provides scientific and technical assistance to Minnesota industries and entrepreneurs. It has offices in Crookston, Marshall and Waseca.

Policy changes in the law include allowing farmers to bury concrete and rebar from a former structure in their land. The solid waste burial must be recorded within 90 days with the county and show the boundary of the burial location.

HF1039/SF1016*/CH14

EDUCATION

School bus transportation changes made

The education commissioner must develop and maintain a list of school bus safety training instruction materials. This is part of a new law that will make it easier for students who attend area learning centers and those requiring lift buses on field trips to get to school or participate in activities.

Rep. Carol McFarlane (R-White Bear Lake) and Sen. Sean Nienow (R-Cambridge) sponsor the law.

HF1179*/SF939/CH103

ENVIRONMENT

Non-residents required to purchase state trail pass

A new state trail pass will be required for non-residents who want to ride off-road vehicles on state trails. The annual \$20 pass must be visible while riding. Three-year passes will be available for \$30. Fees collected will go into the off-road vehicle account for trail maintenance costs.

Sponsored by Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) and Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria), the law also allows the Department of Natural Resources to set fees for all-terrain vehicle environmental and safety education and training according to actual program costs, rather than the previously prescribed \$15 fee.

As of July 1, children ages 12-17 can operate a Class 1 ATV, but any single passenger must be the person's parent or legal guardian.

HF1097/SF1115*/CH107

PUBLIC SAFETY

Synthetic marijuana banned

It will be a gross misdemeanor to sell synthetic marijuana and a person in possession of such a substance will be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Synthetic marijuana, also known as K2 or Spice, is a mix of common herbs sprayed with synthetic chemicals that mimic the effects of marijuana. It is sold in head shops and in stores as incense or potpourri. There is no minimum age to purchase the product.

Rep. John Kriesel (R-Cottage Grove), who sponsors the law with Sen. Dan Hall (R-Burnsville), said the product has been known to cause serious health problems, including seizures. In the first 11 months of 2010 there were more than 2,500 calls nationwide to poison control centers because of synthetic marijuana use. It has been banned in 17 countries and 11 other states.

The law also adds the definition of "analog" to the controlled substances chapter of state law, allowing the Board of Pharmacy to automatically add a substance to a list of Schedule I drugs that are illegal without having to first get legislative approval.

HF57*/SF1166/CH53

Ignition interlock required for some drunk drivers

With the goal of keeping people who drink and drive off state roadways, a new law requires use of an ignition interlock device in some instances. It also provides a way for people with a B-Card license to get the restriction removed.

Under the law, repeat DWI offenders and first-time offenders whose alcohol concentration is at least double the legal limit will have to use an ignition interlock device to drive legally in the state. The law is a statewide expansion of a successful pilot program in Hennepin and Beltrami counties.

An ignition interlock device is installed in motor vehicles to prevent them from being started if a driver's breath exceeds a preset breath-alcohol content limit, which will be 0.02 percent. A driver will also have to breathe into the device at certain times once the vehicle is started. If a driver fails a test, the vehicle will shut down. Device features deter others from starting the vehicle, and a misdemeanor penalty is provided for someone tampering with the device, except for emergency purposes or repair. A misdemeanor penalty also applies for someone who knowingly lets a person requiring ignition interlock to operate a vehicle without the device.

Under the law, first-time offenders whose alcohol concentration is below twice the legal limit will have a choice of getting a limited license, as is in current law, or getting full driving privileges provided they use the ignition interlock device.

The law permits a holder of a B-Card to apply to have the no-alcohol restriction removed from their driving record if the person has not violated the abstinence condition for the past 10 years. A B-Card is issued to a multiple-DWI offender who wants to keep driving and pledges not to drink any alcohol. A no-alcohol restriction is visible on the card.

Alcohol-related crashes account for approximately one-third of all state traffic deaths each year.

The law is sponsored by former Rep. Karla Bigham (DFL-Cottage Grove) and former Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing).

2010 Session: HF3106*/SF2741/CH366