

**NEWS**

from the  
**MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE, ROOM 8, STATE CAPITOL, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155 • 612-296-2146

for immediate release  
February 5, 1982

Contact: Deborah Friedman

Bill would set guidelines for mobile home and park owners

Mobile homes aren't so mobile anymore, and state laws ought to reflect that, Rep. Donna Peterson (DFL-Minneapolis) said when she explained HF1668 to the House General Legislation Committee on February 4th.

HF1668 would list the rights and duties of park residents; forbid park owners to evict residents for no cause; limit the number of rent increases for space in a park to two per year; require owners and the city to have plans for shelter or evacuation for park residents in the case of emergency or severe weather; lists grounds for suspension of a park owner's license; allows individuals to sue for health or safety violations; and gives guidelines for judging what's a reasonable rule for park owners to enact.

Peterson's bill is the result of interim hearings throughout the state, and would update state laws that govern what the building trade calls "manufactured housing."

It's expensive to move a manufactured home, and vacancy rates in parks in the state are so low that there often isn't anywhere else to move, Peterson said. Mobile homes have become more like permanent structures, but the law still treats the relationship between mobile home owners and park owners as a tenant-landlord relationship.

The committee approved the bill and sent it to the full House.

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Contact: Bonnie Kollodge

"Nickel-a-drink bill" gets Minnesota House committee hearing

You'll pay five cents more for a drink in a restaurant or bar if a proposal in the Minnesota House of Representatives continues to get legislative approval.

Representative Glen Anderson is author of the "nickel-a-drink bill," HF1374, which members of the Law Enforcement & Corrections subcommittee took up on Feb. 3.

The bill would tax drinks at five cents per one ounce of hard liquor, 12 ounces of beer, or four ounces of wine, when distributors sell liquor to retail on-sale establishments. According to Anderson, and others who testified, the user tax would help finance Minnesota's DWI laws with about 33 million additional dollars and take some of the cost of alcohol related accidents and programs off the backs of taxpayers and put the burden onto alcohol consumers.

Anderson said proceeds of the tax would go to fund alcohol and drug abuse treatment and prevention programs; to reimburse local governments and the state for alcohol related costs; to assist victims of sexual assault; and to fund alcohol research, planning and education functions.

Although there was no opposition to the bill, representatives of the Upper Midwest Hospitality Association, and Minnesota Beer Wholesalers Association pointed out the problems of taxing only on-sale liquor establishments instead of all liquor sales, and for beer wholesalers, the special problems taxation at the wholesale level would cause.

The bill faces additional scrutiny in the Taxes and Appropriations Committees.

for immediate release  
Feb. 5, 1982  
Contact: Jean Mehle

Legislation could give workers right to refuse  
to work with toxic chemicals

Minnesota workers could refuse to work with hazardous or dangerous chemicals without loss of pay, if a bill before a Minnesota House labor subcommittee becomes law. On Feb. 1, Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) urged the subcommittee to approve her right-to-refuse bill, H.F.1110.

"Only 25 percent of the workers in the United States have right-to-refuse clauses in their labor contracts," said Clark. This bill would extend that right to all workers. Under the bill, employees who believe substances they use on the job may be harmful, can ask their employers for information on the substances. Employers would have 24 hours to supply the information on the chemical make-up, effects of exposure, and conditions for safe use of the substance. If the employer fails to provide the information, or doesn't provide safe conditions, workers can refuse to work.

Opponents to the bill spoke at the Feb. 1 hearing. Jeff Peterson from Economic Laboratory, Inc. said employers need more than 24 hours to get information to their workers, and that the requirement to reveal ingredients in certain products could give away trade secrets. Peterson also said the bill's definition of toxic substances is too broad and could include things such as salt and nutmeg.

Subcommittee members put the bill on the agenda for the next meeting, and asked opponents to suggest amendments that would correct their concerns.

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Contact: Deborah Friedman

Energy Committee bill would add factor to power plant need decision

The Minnesota House Energy Committee on February 4th recommended passage of a bill that would require utility companies to cooperate with each other to provide electricity to Minnesotans.

HF451 (Nelson, K., DFL-Mpls) would require the director of the Energy Agency to turn down a utility's request to build a new power plant if he determines that power plants belonging to other utilities in the state have enough excess power capacity to meet the petitioning utility's needs.

"If there's excess power in the state's utility system, we ought to be using that, not building new plants," Rep. Ken Nelson, author of the bill said, because power plant construction costs drive up the price of electricity for consumers.

HF451, however, allows the director to certify need for a new plant if older plants are using more expensive fossil fuels than the new plant would use.

Michael Murphy, acting director of the Energy Agency, said the bill does not really change the way he makes certificate of need decisions, but it clarifies the Legislature's intent to use excess capacity rather than build new plants.

Committee members voted to amend the effective date of the bill so that it would not apply to the current decision on NSP's proposed Sherco Three power plant.

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Contact: Jean Mehle

Acid rain could harm northern Minnesota lakes

Acid rain is a threat to the environment and human health, according to the Acid Precipitation Study report which the Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Committee heard Feb. 1.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources, and Health Department prepared the report which says acid rain is precipitation that contains pollutants such as sulfur and nitrogen. The rain is more acidic in northern Minnesota than in agricultural areas, and snow is more acidic than rain.

Up to 2500 lakes, generally in Northeastern Minnesota, are moderately to extremely sensitive to acid rain. Those lakes have less capacity to buffer (neutralize) the pollutants. Acidic water affects the ability of fish to regulate their body salt, which could reduce Minnesota's fish population.

Acid rain could put toxic metals into fish tissue, and drinking water supplies, and thus create human health problems.

Much of the sulfur and nitrogen in acid rain come from power plants that burn coal and oil. The cost of decreasing power plant emissions by 30 percent would raise consumer utility bills by about two percent, but the cost of reducing acid rain would be less than the cost of attempting to save crops, forests, health, and lakes, according to the report.

The report says much of the data on acid rain isn't conclusive, and PCA suggests further monitoring to study long-term effects.

for immediate release  
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Contact: Bonnie Kollodge

Court of Appeals may be on November ballot

"Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to permit the Legislature to establish a court of appeals?" may be a question Minnesotans will find on election ballots this fall.

If voters say, "Yes," Minnesota will have a new court which would hear all civil and criminal appeals from district, county, and municipal courts. Currently, the Minnesota Supreme Court hears those appeals, but an ever-increasing caseload has created a need for an intermediate court, according to Rep. John Clawson, (DFL-Center City), author of a bill to authorize the ballot question in November.

The only cases that would bypass the new court and go directly to the Supreme Court are: first degree murder, workers' compensation, and tax court cases.

The House Judiciary Committee gave approval to the constitutional amendment question on Feb. 11, and sent Clawson's bill to the Rules Committee along with the parimutuel and state lottery proposals.

for immediate release  
February 12, 1982

Contact: Deborah Friedman

Vietnam vets would get help with Agent Orange problems under House bill

When the United States armed forces used Agent Orange to kill foliage in Vietnam jungles, they may have contributed to cancers, neurological and reproductive problems, and emotional disorders that Vietnam vets suffer.

A House subcommittee of the General Legislation and Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 11 approved HF1669, a bill that would provide information, referral and counseling for Vietnam vets who came in contact with the chemical.

Rep. Tom Harens (DFL-St Paul), author of HF1669, said the federal government and the veterans' administration have been slow to recognize the link between health problems and exposure to Agent Orange. So the vets have had little financial or informational help on the federal level.

Harens' bill would provide funds for the state commissioner of veterans affairs to inform Vietnam vets of medical studies on the effects of Agent Orange, direct them to proper treatment for health problems, help them file claims for disability, and get them counseling services.

The bill goes next to the full General Legislation Committee on February 18.

Legislators look at cutbacks in interstate tuition reciprocity

Fewer Minnesota students would get tuition breaks at out-of-state universities under HF1664, a bill that's presently in the committee process in the Minnesota House. The proposal would limit the appropriation for the interstate tuition reciprocity program which Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas share.

The program allows students to pay in-state tuition at out-of-state schools, with the home state paying the difference between resident and non-resident tuition.

The idea worked well, when the number of Minnesota students leaving the state equaled the number of out-of-staters coming in, said Rep. Ken Zubay (IR-Rochester), author of the bill. But in the 1980-81 school year, according to Zubay, 6000 more students left the state than came in, and we, in Minnesota, paid out about \$7 million more in tuition differentials than we took in from other states.

It doesn't make sense, Zubay said, to pay Minnesotans to go to school elsewhere when the state's schools are beginning to suffer from lower enrollments. Zubay's bill would continue the program, but would allow for the exchange of only an equal number of students.

Rep. Dave Gruenes (IR-St. Cloud) opposed the bill. Gruenes said it cuts the number of choices Minnesota students have in making their college selections. And it may cost more to educate the students here than to allow them to attend out-of-state schools.

The bill passed the full Education Committee on a 14-13 vote, and goes next to the Appropriations Committee.



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Contact: Laura E. Godfrey

Subcommittee hears certificate of need changes

Certificate of need legislation hasn't held down the cost of health care in the state, according to testimony at a meeting of the Minnesota House Health Care subcommittee Feb. 11.

"The fact is, all this work we've done over the past few years hasn't been effective. The time to repeal certificates of need is now," Rep. Bob Reif, (IR-White Bear Lake) a physician who presented a bill to repeal certificate of need requirements.

Certificate of need legislation, which became Minnesota law in 1971, requires hospitals and other health care facilities to go through three hearing and approval steps to get permission to buy costly equipment, or to construct or remodel buildings. The purpose of the certificate process is to prevent unnecessary expenses that increase the price of health care.

Many analysts and health care providers believe more competition in the health care market is the answer to the problem.

The subcommittee heard several bills this legislative session which would eliminate the certificate of need requirement, but the Legislature would then face having to write new laws to control medical cost increases.

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Contact: Jean Mehle

House committee approves hazardous waste clean up bill

On Feb. 9, the Minnesota Environmental Response Act, HF1176, took its first step toward becoming law when the Minnesota House Local and Urban Affairs Committee recommended passage of the act.

According to Rep. Dee Long, (DFL-Mpls), author of the bill, the proposal's three main purposes are to:

- o put into law a strict liability for hazardous waste spills
- o to set up the state's duty to act when hazardous waste spills occur
- o to create a fund to pay for clean up costs that federal money won't cover and for the state's portion of expenses when federal matching funds are available.

"The problem now," according to Long, "is that no one accepts financial responsibility for hazardous waste spills, and cases end up in lengthy court battles over who should pay." The Pollution Control Agency doesn't pay to clean up hazardous waste spills unless those responsible for the spills will reimburse the state.

The bill went to the Environment and Natural Resources Committee and must also get the review of members of the committees on Governmental Operations and Taxes before going to the full House.

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February 19, 1982

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Minnesota House committee approves gravel-tax bill

The Minnesota House Taxes Committee, Feb. 16, approved HF374, a bill that would require all counties to charge a seven-cent-per-ton tax on gravel, sand, limestone, and other crushed rock companies take out of Minnesota land.

Author of the bill, Representative Jim Evans of Detroit Lakes, said the tax makes sense because gravel, and other mineral aggregate materials, are a depletable natural resource for the state, much like oil in other states. Money from the gravel tax would go to reclaim mines and fix local roads haulers use to move gravel.

Some counties already tax gravel, but Evans says none of the counties tax in the same way. This bill would bring uniformity and clarify who pays the tax, when, and how much, according to Evans.

Opponents of the bill say the tax is another burden on Minnesota business, because one of the biggest users of aggregate materials, which includes gravel, is government for the construction of public roads. Therefore, government would pay a large portion of the proposed tax.

The full House takes up the bill next with the recommendation for passage from the Taxes Committee.

Definition of a school

All students aren't in the major public and private school systems.. Some parents teach their children at home and call it a school. Religious groups have started small church schools and as more people take education into their own hands, educators have brought the question, "What is a school?," to the Legislature.

On Feb. 17, the Minnesota House Education Committee took a step toward coming up with an answer when the committee recommended passage of HF1459, a bill that lists the subjects a school must teach and requires parents to report to school superintendents that the school their child attends meets for 175 days a year, teaches the required subjects, and has teachers whose qualifications are "essentially equivalent" to those of public school teachers.

The bill seeks to assure that all children have a comparable minimum education, whether they attend public school or small church or home schools.

Brother William Rhode, Education Director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, supported the bill saying, "the bill protects the rights of parents to educate their children, and recognizes the state's concern of educating its citizens."

But opponents of the bill said it does not sufficiently address the issue of how to determine if a teacher's qualifications are essentially equivalent to those of a public school teacher.

The bill comes up next in the full House.

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Armed services seek access to high-school  
student addresses

If a proposed new law makes it through the Legislature, the United States Armed Services would have access to high-school student mailing lists that would include student birthdates, unless students or parents object. Presently, the Armed Services can have mailing lists of senior high-school students if their schools decide to release the lists.

HF1871, a bill which the Minnesota House Education Committee recommended for passage at a Feb. 17 meeting, would make the mailing list automatically available to the Armed Services. The lists would contain names of all students, unless students or parents specifically request removal of their names.

The bill would require schools to notify students and parents that the students' names would be on a mailing list going to the Armed Services and that they have the option to remove them.

Supporters of HF1871, representing the Armed Services, said about 200 Minnesota high schools don't give student mailing lists to them. And a student from Washburn Senior High School in Minneapolis testified that he supports the right of schools to refuse, because he views release of mailing lists as a violation of student rights to privacy.

HF1871 now goes to the full House which may take it up for consideration within a week. Author of the proposal is Representative Bob McEachern, a DFLer from St. Michael.

Minnesota House committee looks at human rights  
and investments in foreign countries

The Minnesota House Governmental Operations Committee on Feb. 16 voted to recommend HF1811 (Staten, DFL, Minnesota) for passage, a bill that would prohibit the Minnesota State Board of Investment from making future investments in corporations and banks that have holdings in South Africa and Namibia, unless those corporations and banks can prove they have established fair employment practices for labor organizations and people of all races.

The bill, which goes next to the full House, hits specifically at South Africa, because that country practices apartheid, a government-sanctioned system of racial segregation and discrimination. But people who testified for and against HF1811 at the Feb. 16 meeting debated whether discouragement of foreign investment is a better way to support human rights than to encourage business investment with the hope of influencing social change.

Bernard Brommer, from the AFL-CIO, testifying for the bill, said, "With the continuing atrocities to workers who are trying to organize labor unions, it's time for Minnesotans to speak out in opposition to the policies of South Africa's regime through elected representatives."

On the other side, Donn Osmon, a vice-president with the 3M Company, testified that legislation, such as HF1811, is a step backwards in the area of human rights. He said, "American companies are a major source for social change, serving as a positive example and participating in organizations that are absolutely opposed to racial discrimination and apartheid."

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House Education Committee approves School Aids Bill

The School Aids Bill, HF1555, passed out of the Minnesota House Education committee February 19, but still needs the Appropriation Committee's approval before it goes to the House floor.

Much of this year's school aids bill is a result of the emergency budget bill the House and Senate passed last month in special session. That bill required the Legislature to take a new look at programs and requirements that may be costing school districts more than they can bear.

HF1555 would erase the requirement that districts conduct a preschool health screening clinic and ease some reporting and accounting requirements. School districts may elect to continue part of this program and receive state reimbursement. School superintendents told members of the School Aids Division who drafted the bill that these changes were necessary to make their budgets more flexible.

The bill also allows school boards to ask voters to increase property taxes to pay for services which they otherwise might have to cut.

These taxes would pay for: bus transportation for secondary students who live from one to two miles from school, (two miles is the new cut off for state reimbursement for transportation costs), bus transportation for students who would otherwise walk a dangerous route to get to school; summer school teachers for students with level one, two or three handicaps, and other services which basic state aids don't pay for.

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for immediate release  
February 26, 1982Contact: Bonnie Kollodge  
(612) 296-2146Time to act on acid rain is now, says state legislator

The time to act on the acid rain problem is now, according to Representative Arlene Lehto, a DFLer from Duluth. Lehto has a bill in the Minnesota House that she says would reduce the amount of pollutants in the environment which cause acid rain. An Environment subcommittee heard the bill, HF1798, on Feb. 25 in St. Paul.

Acid rain is a by-product of businesses and industries which burn fossil fuels and release sulfur dioxide into the air. Rain or snow then deposits the pollutants on the land or in the water, creating a threat to the environment and human health.

It's not easy to get a handle on the problem, however, when according to Pollution Control Agency statistics, 70 to 80 percent of the sources of acid rain are outside the state of Minnesota.

HF1798 would attempt to curb the sources of acid rain in the state and encourage other states, the federal government, and Canada to also take steps to alleviate or eliminate the problem of acid deposits. Under HF1798, the PCA would adopt standards for control and a plan to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions both in and outside of the state.

The subcommittee approved the bill on Feb. 26, and sent it on to the full Environment & Natural Resources Committee.



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Contact: Laura E. Godfrey

Stadium bill and capital improvements pass Minnesota House

Bills to change the membership on the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission and to approve bond financing for repairs to state buildings passed in the Minnesota House Wednesday, Feb. 26.

The stadium commission change would add two Minneapolis residents to the seven-member commission in response to testimony that Minneapolis special taxes pay for the Metro Dome and the dome affects mostly Minneapolis businesses.

The law which created the commission originally read that the state-wide membership on the commission would change to mostly city of Minneapolis appointees when the stadium is complete. The change the House passed would alter that, making the commission consist of two Minneapolis, four metropolitan and three non-metro members.

The bonding bill which also received House approval would grant money for nearly \$7 million in repairs and improvements to state facilities, \$5.35 million of that coming from a bond sale next summer.

The money would go for "emergency" repairs to leaky roofs and heating plants at state schools, according to Education Division Chairman, Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Brooklyn Center) and for other fire safety and roof improvements at state offices, prisons, and highway department buildings. The bill also includes planning funds for a women's correctional facility to replace the one at Shakopee and money for highway department storage sheds.

Both bills need Senate agreement before going to the governor for signature.

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Contact: Laura E. Godfrey

School Aids bill goes to full House

The Minnesota House version of the School Aids Bill got approval from members of the Appropriations Committee Feb. 26 and will go next before the full House.

The bill, HF1555, sets state funding and program requirements for the state's school districts and sets districts property taxing authority.

Basic per pupil state aids would rise 14 percent for the 83-84 school year under the bill, but program cuts and additional taxes will have to make up for tight budgets at both the state and school district levels, according to testimony on the bill.

Some of the cost saving measures include removal of state mandates-- some reporting and budgeting requirements, plus elimination of mandatory pre-school health screening. Districts may elect to continue a scaled down version of the screening program, but the bill would eliminate the requirement that they participate. Special education changes may also save districts money by removing funding for summer school classes for handicapped students at levels one through three (an optional program) and giving that money to summer school for levels four through six (a required program.) Special education class sizes may also float 20 percent, and districts would have to limit administrative salaries to 7.25 percent of the special education salary budget, except for departments of fewer than 10 people.

School district's property taxing authority would increase to allow districts to raise revenue to cover some budget gaps and keep up school services.

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Labor backs bill to supply advance information to employees on plant closures

Employees have a right to get ample notice that their place of employment is closing or relocating, according to AFL-CIO president David Roe.

Roe testified Feb. 24 at a House Labor-Management Relations Committee meeting in favor of HF542 (Rice, DFL-Mpls), a bill that would require employers to give two-year notice to employees, employee organizations, a state board, and affected communities, of company plans to close down, relocate, or reduce operations.

Other provisions of the bill would set up a 10-member Minnesota Community, Business and Job Preservation Board to conduct studies and collect information on problems that arise from plant closings, relocations, or reductions in operations.

Upon notice of a plant closing, the board would set up a local action committee to provide alternatives to plant closure, or minimize the effects on communities and employees of closure.

On the 24th, the committee heard only from supporters of the legislation, many who talked about the impact of sudden unemployment on individuals, families, and communities. Roe argued on behalf of many who testified that they received notice within days or weeks of plant closure, leaving some without unemployment or other insurance, retirement, and all without jobs.

Loren Turpin of St. Paul said he worked for a St. Paul company for 20 years when the company relocated, "I'm now in the biggest job I've ever had and that's rehiring myself after 20 years out of the job market. Some of us are too young for retirement and too old to look for another job, so where do I go from here?"

The committee didn't take formal action on the bill, and has not yet scheduled further hearings on the bill.

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Minnesota House looks at unequal pay among state employees

Differences in wages between men and women who are state employees was on the agenda for the Minnesota Government Operations Committee on February 18. Representative Wayne Simoneau of Fridley, author of House File 2005, presented his bill which would provide for equal pay opportunities among certain government employees.

Minnesota is dragging its feet, Simoneau said, and has not responded to changing times, and to the numbers of women in the work force today. He referred to an analysis by the Council on the Economic Status of Women. The Council looked at 10 male-dominated state jobs and 10 female-dominated jobs to compare pay scales of men and women state employees. Results of the analysis showed that the state pays women significantly less than men.

According to the bill, the commissioner of employee relations will compare skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions to determine which jobs are unequally paid. The bill sets aside money for collective bargaining, and a part of that will go to make wage adjustments.

The Governmental Operations Committee approved an amended version of the bill, and sent it on to the Appropriations Committee for further consideration.