



## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

December 11, 2009

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS ELECTRONIC VOTER REGISTRATION PACKAGE**

On Wednesday, the House Ethics and Elections Committee heard testimony on a two-bill package to allow electors to electronically submit voter registration applications to the secretary of state (SOS) and local clerks. HBs 4539 and 4540 have been introduced by Rep. Lesia Liss (D-Warren) and received support for the concept from MTA and other clerk representatives. The bills would require the SOS to develop and implement a system to allow an applicant to submit a voter registration application via the SOS Web site. Each applicant would need to certify that the information provided is true, agree to the use of their digitized signature if captured by the SOS and sign the application with an electronic signature. The current bill package would also allow those who do not have a Michigan driver's license or state identification (I.D.) card to submit their voter registration application online. However, these registrations would be considered a registration by mail and the voter would have to provide appropriate I.D. at the polls before voting. Finally, the bills would authorize the SOS to implement additional security measures to ensure the integrity of the submitted applications. Several changes to the bills were discussed to increase security measures and to possibly limit the ability to register online to those having a Michigan driver's license or state I.D. card. Final action by the committee will likely be taken next week.

### **SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES DIESEL FUEL INCREASE; GOVERNOR READY TO SIGN**

The Senate Transportation Committee approved legislation on Tuesday that would bring taxes charged on diesel fuel purchases to be equal to gasoline taxes. The bills, SBs 862 and 863, sponsored by Sen. Jud Gilbert (R-Clay Twp.), would raise diesel taxes by 4 cents per gallon, bringing the total state tax on diesel up to 19 cents, equal to taxes currently charged on gasoline. The bills, which were approved by a 4-1 vote, would direct the new revenue (roughly \$36 million more annually) to bridge repairs. The new revenue would be split between state and local bridges. The governor reacted quickly with comments that she would sign the bill even if it were approved outside of a more comprehensive approach, such as the recommendations made by the TF2 Funding Study Report. It is unclear how quickly the Senate would address the bill on the floor. The bill would also need approval in the House. MTA supports the legislation.

### **FARM MARKET GAAMP GO TO AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**

The State Agriculture Commission is scheduled to receive the recommendation from a drafting committee on the establishment of Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMP) for farm stands and farm markets. The Michigan Right to Farm Act states that a farm operation includes marketing produce at roadside stands or farm markets. The proposed GAAMP tries to identify the complicated and intertwined nature of the Right to Farm Act, local zoning laws and other state laws when it comes to farm markets. This GAAMP is unique in that it moves away from guidelines detailing proper farming procedures to dealing with everything from curb cuts to signage issues. Much of the GAAMP defers to local zoning requirements. Probably the most controversial component of the GAAMP involves situations where the farm market is not operated on an actual part of the farm. It suggests that some people may rent space on other agricultural land that has better access to traveled highways. MTA will be testifying at the commission meeting that will take place at 9 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 14 at Constitution Hall in Lansing.

### **COMMUNITY FORUM ON RURAL JOBS DEVELOPMENT**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Farm Services Agency will be holding a community forum on jobs and economic growth on Thursday, Dec. 17 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Lansing Community College West Campus. To RSVP and for further information, please contact Christina Stanley at 517-324-5207 or e-mail [christina.stanley@mi.usda.gov](mailto:christina.stanley@mi.usda.gov).

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