



MEMORANDUM

TO: Desiree Fragoso, City Manager

CC: Mayor Phillip Pounds

FROM: Tompkins, Thompson & Brown Government Affairs

DATE: April 14, 2022

RE: Legislative Report

The following is a report on legislation that has been introduced in the House and Senate.

Note that the House was on furlough this week and did not meet in committee meetings or in session. The Senate met in session only one day while the Senate Finance Committee focused on its budget work.

BUDGET

The Senate Finance Committee approved its version of the FY22-23 budget this week, including a \$12.5 million increase to the Local Government Fund base amount.

The Senate Finance Committee included this proviso in its version of the budget: Earnings limitation does not apply to retired members of the SCRS or the PORS who return to covered employment in FY22-23 to participate in the state's public health preparedness and response to the COVID-19 virus.

Senator Tom Davis added a proviso to the budget that would give families of law enforcement killed in the line of duty \$75,000. In addition to that amount, an additional \$75,000 would be paid, if the officer is accidentally killed and the accidental death occurs due to certain circumstances.

Below are items that were in the House budget and that we will confirm are in the Senate Finance budget once we review the spreadsheets from the Senate Finance Committee when they become available:

- Funds for the 1% credit for employers' retirement system contributions to offset the annual increase

- \$3.5 million for the program to provide a supplemental insurance policy for firefighters diagnosed with cancer
- \$500,000 in recurring funds for post-traumatic stress disorder treatment services for first responders
- \$20 million to the SC Department of Public Safety for grants to fund local law enforcement body cameras and vests
- \$25 million for the PFAS Remediation Fund (to address contaminants in public water systems)

ARPA FUNDS

The Senate Finance Committee met to discuss H. 4408, the joint resolution to allocate federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The full Finance Committee adopted the Subcommittee's strike-and-insert amendment to H. 4408, which uses the language of S. 952, the Senate version of the ARPA allocation and makes certain changes.

H. 4408, as amended, makes these allocations:

1. DOT - \$453,500,000 – transportation infrastructure acceleration account – expedite projects already in SCDOT's 10-year plan
2. RIA Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Projects - \$900 million
3. ORS Broadband Expansion - \$400 million
4. DHEC Public Health Lab - \$104.4 million
5. Grant Administration Services and Reimbursement for Prior Costs Associated with those Services at the Department of Administration - \$8 million

The amendment also adds a new source of funds called the Capital Projects Fund of \$185 million that is required to be spent on broadband according to the US Treasury. The Capital Projects Fund will be included in the bill to act as a source of funds for a portion of the \$400 million that is being allocated for broadband expansion.

As amended, the new Senate version of H. 4408 would leave \$818 million to spend in a second phase of an ARPA allocation. This leftover amount has increased due to the Capital Projects Fund dollars as mentioned above.

The Senate Finance Committee gave H. 4408 a favorable, as amended, report on April 12.

ACTION

Changes to Election Law - H. 4919 (Lucas and others)

Description: The bill makes changes to the state's early voting and absentee voting processes. The bill also prohibits candidates from filing for more than one office at a time.

Status: H. 4919 passed the House without any significant changes to municipal elections. This week, the bill was placed on special order status on the full Senate calendar prior to the subcommittee hearing on the bill. H. 4919 will be debated next week.

Comment: At the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee meeting on the bill, after the bill was placed on special order status in the Senate, the Subcommittee gave the bill a favorable, as amended, report. The amendments change the municipal election certification period from 2 to 10 days. The amendment also creates a 3-14 day early voting period depending on the type of election and provides for two to seven early voting locations in each county.

We will monitor this bill for any language affecting municipal election commissions.

CROSSOVER DEADLINE

S. 106, Beach Restoration Trust Fund, a bill by Campsen that would dedicate 25% of the State's Admissions Tax to beach renourishment did not make it out of the Senate before the annual crossover deadline, thus killing it for the session.

H. 4547, a short term rental bill that would punish municipalities that ban short term property rentals, did not make it out of the House before the annual crossover deadline, rendering it dead for the session.

S. 1151, a sunset provision for all beachfront management regulations and laws, did not make it out of the Senate before crossover.

S.2, DHEC restructuring, which creates two separate state agencies, one for Health and one for the Environment, did make crossover, but is likely to still die in the House, from our understanding.

PLEASE LET US KNOW OF ANY ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION YOU WOULD LIKE AN UPDATE ON