

County Commission Days – Feb. 21, 2008

Today in the Senate.....

Today's work agenda for the Senate has not yet been established, but it is anticipated that the Senate will return to work on the legislation restricting the transfer of campaign contributions between political action committees. The Senate Rules Committee will meet at 9:30 p.m. to determine the work agenda for today and the ACCA staff is working to have the bills listed below added to the special order calendar as soon as possible. The Senate will convene at 10:00 a.m.

SB 211 by Sen. Hank Sanders, the second version of the County Modernization Act, this bill overhauls the process for bonding of elected officials at the county level as well as repeals a host of old code sections unused by county government today. The bill also streamlines the seldom used procedure for changing the county seat.

SB 53 by Sen. Bobby Denton, makes three technical changes to the Alabama bid law, including increasing the local bid preference to five percent and making the bid bond "permissive."

SB 43 by Sen. Linda Coleman, proposes a constitutional amendment that would require five negative votes in the Senate or 15 in the House in order to force a statewide vote on a proposed constitutional amendment. Currently, only one negative vote in either chamber can force the statewide referendum.

SB 220 by Sen. Ted Little, allows local 9-1-1 districts to contract with the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center for network communication. The bill is now ready for floor action.

The members of the Senate Rules Committee are: *Chairman, Sen. Lowell Barron; Members, Sens. Lindsey, T. Little, Bedford, Butler, Denton, Figures, French, Griffith, Mitchem, Ross, Smith, Smitherman, Mitchell, Z. Little and Bishop.*

Senate Committee Issues Needing Attention:

The Legislation aimed at stripping the counties' budget authority (**SB 242 by Sen. Steve French**) is still awaiting action in the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. Although the bill is not on the committee agenda this week, county officials are encouraged to take this opportunity to contact the committee members to ask that they vote to "indefinitely postpone" the legislation. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee: *Chairman, Sen. Wendell Mitchell; members, Sens. Beason, Benefield, Coleman, Denton, Dixon, Figures, Lindsey, Means, Penn, Preuitt, Ross, Smith, Zeb Little and Waggoner.*

The ACCA legislation allowing counties to establish trust funds to finance the payment of benefits to retirees, **SB 380 by Sen. Myron Penn**, is pending in the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. It is hoped that this legislation will be on the committee agenda for next week. Please contact the members of the committee listed above to ask that they support this permissive legislation.

Today in the House.....

At 10:00 a.m. the House will convene and will work on the regular order calendar. The first bill on the calendar addresses the punishment of those persons convicted of driving under the influence. This bill is expected to dominate the work on the House floor today.

The House is expected to establish a special order calendar for NEXT TUESDAY that will include a variety of bills. The ACCA staff is working to have **HB 110 by Rep. Richard Lindsey**, the House version of the 2008 County Modernization Act, included on that calendar. Because we are encouraged that this bill might be included on the calendar, is it important that all House members be asked to vote in favor of this legislation on Tuesday.

House Committee Issues Needing Attention:

HB 253 by Rep. Mike Curtis, which is the House version of SB 220, was set for committee action yesterday but the bill was removed from the agenda because of opposition from AT&T. The Association staff is working to resolve problems with this bill. In the meantime, county officials are encouraged to contact the members of the Government Appropriations Committee: *Chairman, Rep. John Knight; Members: Reps. Page, Gaston, Allen, L. Baker, Beasley, Canfield, Grantland, Hall, Letson, Love, C. Newton, Salaam and E. Thomas.*

HB 16 by Rep. Jim McClendon, which is scheduled for a vote by the House Public Safety Committee on Wednesday morning, authorizes counties to post signs on dangerous road and bridge locations. An amendment will be offered to remove counties from the bill. The members of the Public Safety Committee are: *chairman, Rep. Thad McClammy; members, Reps. E. Thomas, A. Baker, Ball, Curtis, Drake, Ford, Hurst, Knight, Lewis, McCampbell, McCutcheon, D. Newton, White and Wood.*

Road and Bridge Package

Three of the four bills anticipated as part of this year's funding package for County Road and Bridge Construction were introduced last week. In the House, two bills sponsored by **Rep. Mac Gipson (HB 470 and HB 471)** would increase the statewide gas tax and allow county commissions to levy a local gasoline and diesel fuel tax. A third bill, **HB 466 sponsored by Rep. Mike Hill**, clears the way for a second County Bridge Bond Issue.

The bills are pending in the House Government Appropriations Committee. The members of the Committee are listed above. Although the bills are not expected on the committee agenda this week, it is important that county officials use this time to contact each member to secure a commitment to vote to give the bills a "favorable report". The legislation changing the collection point for gasoline and motor fuel is expected to be introduced today by **Rep. Johnny Mac Morrow**. The bridge bond issue legislation was also introduced in the Senate as **SB 357 by Sen. Larry Means**. This bill is awaiting action in the Senate Economic Expansion & Trade Committee.

Expansion of Bid Law Exemptions

Legislation increasing the bid law limit to \$15,000 and allowing the inclusion of "life cycle" considerations in determining the lowest bidder has been introduced in both the House and Senate (**HB 442 by Rep. Jeremy Oden and SB 364 by Sen. Parker Griffith**). The legislation violates ACCA policy, which states the Association will not support increasing the bid threshold beyond \$10,000. Further, the Association staff is very concerned about the "life cycle" provisions because the bill lacks specifics and could lead to many adverse audits by the Examiners.

*Because the House and Senate are expected to adjourn by lunchtime, we will not hold our usual noon meeting to update you on the activities of the day. If possible, please contact the ACCA staff before you leave Montgomery to ensure there are not other matters that need attention. You can reach the ACCA staff by calling 850-7483 or by using "28377*183" if your Southern Linc phone has the cross-fleeting feature.*