



Weekly Update

*A weekly update from the
Association of County Commissions of Alabama*

This Week in the Alabama Legislature...Feb. 26, 2010

On Thursday, the Alabama Legislature reached the mid-way point of this year's Regular Session without the anticipated Senate floor fight on the bill to authorize a statewide vote on legalizing computerized bingo. Though neither side is giving away any public secrets, it appears the bill will not be the subject of Senate floor debate until at least 21 Senators have agreed to vote in favor of the measure. Supporters of the bill could not secure the 21st vote this week.

This delay presented an opportunity to move several ACCA bills through House and Senate committees this week in anticipation of floor opportunities as the two chambers move toward an anticipated "Spring" recess beginning March 12. ***In the meantime, county officials are still encouraged to contact their House and Senate members in support of ACCA's legislative efforts in Montgomery.***

Both the House and Senate will return to work on March 2, with the Senate's work day beginning with a rare morning session at 10:00. The House will reconvene at 1 p.m. on Tuesday. Below is an overview of the issues needing attention from county officials.

For more information, logon to the Association's Web site at www.acca-online.org.

LITTER BILL READY FOR FINAL VOTE IN BOTH CHAMBERS

Both the House and Senate are posed to pass the ACCA legislation that would allow litter laws to be enforced by license inspectors and/or solid waste officers. This legislation was recommended for introduction this year by the ACCA Environmental Steering Committee. ***House members should be encouraged to SUPPORT SB195 by Ted Little, and Senate members should be asked to vote IN FAVOR OF HB211 by Rep. Cam Ward. If passed, either bill would go to Gov. Bob Riley for his signature.***

AUTOPSY TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION ALSO READY

A House committee this week approved the bill would resolve the dispute over the cost of transporting bodies for the purpose of conducting autopsy. The House Government Appropriations Committee approved **HB312 by Rep. Leslie Vance**, sending it to the full House for a vote. The Senate version, **SB232 by Sen. Bobby Denton**, is expected on the Senate floor as early as Tuesday. ***County officials are encouraged to ask their SENATORS to vote IN FAVOR OF SB232 by Sen. Denton.***

LEGISLATION SEEKS TO END APPEAL BONDS

Legislation aimed at reversing a recent court ruling that requires counties to post "bond" when appealing civil cases is expected on the docket of the House Judiciary Committee in the coming weeks. Sponsored by **House Speaker Pro Tem Demetrius Newton, HB548** was introduced after a Jefferson County Circuit Judge ruled the bonds would be necessary in all cases involving counties. ***Please contact the members of the House Judiciary Committee and encourage their SUPPORT of HB548.***

House Judiciary Committee: Chair Rep. Marcel Black; Reps. C. Newton, McMillan, Collier, DeMarco, England, Hall, Irons, Oson, J. Robinson, Salaam, Sanderford and Ward.

NO COMPROMISE ON 9-1-1 LEGISLATION

This week ACCA staff was unable to reach a compromise with the Alabama Broadcasters Association on the bill that would restrict the release of copies of recordings of 9-1-1 tapes (**HB159 by Rep. Ron Johnson** and **SBI86 by Sen. Hinton Mitchem**). More serious discussions on a timetable for moving this legislation in the Senate will begin this week.

The legislation gained national attention this week, including stories in the major newspapers carried by the Associated Press, as well as several national syndicated radio shows. **County officials are encouraged to express SUPPORT for the passage of legislation that would protect the rights of 9-1-1 callers without placing an undue burden on the 9-1-1 districts.**

ACCA WORKS ON REVISIONS TO PAY-AS-YOU-GO BILL

In an effort to secure committee support of the bill (**HB501 by Rep. Craig Ford**) to allow county-by-county referendum on an increase in gasoline and diesel fuel tax, ACCA staff this week surfaced a draft substitute that included many changes requested by committee members.

County officials and employees should voice their SUPPORT of this bill to the committee members: Reps. Dukes, Curtis, Laird, Taylor, Wood, McMillan, Drake, England, McClendon, McDaniel, McLaughlin, Oden, Scott, Warren and J. Williams.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS

County administrators and commissioners are encouraged to contact their Senators to encourage SUPPORT of the bill that would require the Board of Adjustment to pay county claims unless the agency denying the claim has procedures on timely filings is ready for floor action. This bill (**HB146 by Rep. Richard Laird**) has passed the House and is now awaiting committee action in the Senate.

SHERIFFS REMOVED FROM INTERNAL INVESTIGATION BILL

Association staff has reached a compromise with those pushing legislation that would establish requirements for internal investigations conducted by law enforcement agencies in Alabama. **HB86 by Rep. Spencer Collier** is expected to be amended during a Wednesday committee meeting. **Please contact the committee members and urge them to OPPOSE the legislation unless sheriffs are removed from the provisions of the bill.**

House Government Operations Committee: Chair Rep. O. Robinson; Reps. Letson, Payne, Beech, Boyd, Coleman, Fields, Gaston, Hill, Howard, Hubbard, McCutcheon, Moore, Morrow and Shiver.

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST...

ACCA staff testified this week against **HB337**, which would have established a tag for boat trailers. The bill was carried over by the House Government Appropriations Committee.

The Senate version, **SB409 by Sen. Roger Bedford**, is out of committee and could reach the Senate floor any time.

Association staff will seek to amend Senate legislation (**SB33 by Sen. Larry Means**) that would require ethics training for elected officials to ensure the mandatory training currently required by counties is recognized as meeting the bill's requirements.

CHECK IT OUT ONLINE...

The real-time status of all ACCA, Danger and local bills can be found by going to acca-online.org and following the steps under **Legislative News**. Please make copies of this report for all county officials and employees. Remember, ACCA staff frequently updates the Association's Web site — acca-online.org — with the latest information on the activities in Montgomery.