

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

APWA KC Metro

Kansas Legislative Report

January 12, 2024

In Topeka, the 2024 Legislative Session is officially underway. The first week saw House and Senate members return to Topeka, pause for a snow day on Tuesday and then most committees met at least once to start their work.

On Wednesday evening Governor Kelly outlined her vision for the next year as she delivered her sixth State of the State address. The theme of her address lauded the state's economic strength and focused on ways to enhance rural Kansas. With this in mind, the Governor noted her desire to see the state expand Medicaid, fully fund infrastructure and schools, and pass a comprehensive tax package that she unveiled earlier this week.

The next few weeks will see hundreds of new bills introduced while committees receive agency and industry reports and begin holding hearings. Meanwhile, House and Senate budget committees will dissect the Governor's proposed budget before crafting their own.

Water Policy & Funding

The House Water Committee had its first meeting this Thursday, hearing a presentation from the Kansas geological survey. In the following meeting, the Kansas Corporation Commission provided a presentation explaining abandoned well plugging. Next week, the House Committee has an informational hearing from Earl Lewis and the Kansas Department of Agriculture concerning dam safety.

On the Senate side, the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources had a quick meeting for committee introductions. Next week, the committee will hear the update on federal and state programs to plug abandoned oil and gas wells in Kansas.

In the Governor's state of the state address, she praised the enhanced commitment of \$35M for water support over four years, along with the proposal to fully fund the State Water Plan Fund for the second year in a row.

Transportation Policy & Funding

The House Committee on Transportation met for the first time on Thursday. In this committee, the Kansas Department of Revenue provided the Division of Vehicles' annual report. Looking ahead to next week, there will be a presentation on KDOT from Secretary Calvin Reed with a presentation on Kansas Highway Patrol the following day. No hearings are scheduled at this time.

In the Senate, the Committee on Transportation only held a brief introductory meeting. In the upcoming week, the committee has three briefings scheduled. The first briefing is from the Kansas Department of Transportation with a briefing from Steve Hewitt of the Kansas Turnpike Authority. The committee concludes the week with a briefing by the Kansas Highway Patrol.

The Governor's proposed budget once again seeks a fully funded State Highway Fund without extraordinary transfers.

Thank you and please let us know if you have any questions.

Travis Lowe