

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT

***APWA KC Metro***

***Kansas Legislative Report***

***May 1, 2024***

In Topeka, the 2024 Legislative Session is in the books as legislators returned for a four-day veto session to consider veto overrides and wrap up lingering items. During the April break, Governor Kelly vetoed 16 bills, plus several line items from the budget bill. After the dust cleared, seven vetoed bills were successfully overridden.

As April 30 turned into the early morning of May 1, the House and Senate wrapped up business for the veto session. Before adjourning, the Legislature approved an omnibus budget bill, school finance budget and policy bill, along with a handful of conference committee reports. Tax policy, however, dominated most of the discussion under the dome. With Governor Kelly's veto of the two-bracket income tax package, a slightly modified version (SB 37 conference committee report) was approved in the final hours. SB 37 includes the same provisions of the previous version but with higher rates for the two-bracket income tax system, making the tax cut less expensive for the state.

There is already speculation Governor Kelly will veto this version too and call a special session of the Legislature to consider a new tax package. If this occurs, the Legislature may also consider a commerce bill that provides tax incentives for new professional sport stadiums.

With the session complete, focus turns to election season. All 125 House and 40 Senate seats are up for election. June 3 marks the filing deadline, followed by sprints to the primary election on August 6 and the general election on November 5. All statewide office terms, including the Governor, remain in place through 2026.

The election promises to create change, as several senators and representatives announced they will not seek re-election. At the federal level, second district Congressman Jake LaTurner (R-Galena) announced he will not seek re-election, creating a strong show of interest from a number of candidates.

## **Water Policy & Funding**

Related to water policy, the April break finalized pending water legislation. HB 2634, providing additional provisions for the chief engineer to consider when issuing orders of designations for local enhanced management areas and intensive groundwater use control areas, had previously passed both chambers unanimously and sent to the governor. Governor Kelly signed HB 2634 into law on April 15.

Governor Kelly previously signed SB 331, removing the definition of lead-free and an exception for leaded joints in the public water supply systems, into law on April 4.

Additionally, HB 2587, authorizing the board of directors for a drainage district to hold a meeting in executive session in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, was signed into law on March 29.

## **Transportation Policy & Funding**

During the April break, Governor Kelly signed HB 2498 into law. The HB 2498 conference committee report triples the annual transfer from the State Highway Fund to the Kansas Airport Improvement Program, from \$5M to \$15M. Since this is an annual transfer, the \$15M is the new set number and does not need to be reapproved in future years.

Governor Kelly signed the mega budget (SB 28 conference committee report) into law. The veto session saw approval of the omnibus budget (HB 2551 conference committee report). Of interest, the budget contained provisions that appropriates \$2M from the State Highway Fund, for a license plate reader system pilot program and \$300,000 from the State Highway Fund to conduct an assessment concerning reconfiguration of Kansas Highway Patrol assets in Salina, including a contemporary training center, dispatch center, and troop headquarters.

Further, the budget contains language to amend the Build Kansas Matching Grant program to allow a community to request funding for water, transportation, energy, cybersecurity, or broadband infrastructure projects that are also eligible for federal funding requiring a match, for FY 2025, 2026, and 2027.

Several transportation bills moved across the finish line. Governor Kelly approved HB 2783, a bill prohibiting a state agency, city or county from restricting the sale or use of motor vehicles based on the energy source used for the vehicles; allowing a state agency, city and county to have their own purchase policies for motor vehicles.

HB 2501 was also signed into law. Originally a bill designating an official state steam locomotive, the HB 2501 conference committee report requires a railroad to maintain a minimum distance of 250 feet between a near-edge railroad crossing and railroad rolling stock stored on sidings if the railroad crossing does not have electronic warning signals. The bill would authorize KDOT to determine a greater or lesser distance at a particular location and permit or order a railroad to maintain the greater or lesser distance.

While policy bills were introduced and considered this session, remaining bills not passed are now officially dead.

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

Travis Lowe