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Legislative Update

Friday, March 13, 2009

MONDAY, MARCH 9 2009

RACING COMMISSION BETTING ON SLOT MACHINES TO SAVE HORSERACING, BOOST STATE REVENUES

That the operator of one of Ohio's racetracks filed for bankruptcy last week is yet one more sign that the industry is dying and needs lawmakers' help to expand gambling at tracks, the state's top horseracing official said Monday.

Ohio State Racing Commission Executive Director Sam Zonak said the agency is urging lawmakers to pass legislation that would permit Ohio's seven racetracks to operate slot machines.

He said the state could blow a huge opportunity to control gambling profits if major national gaming companies are successful with their ballot issue to allow four casinos in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Toledo.

"They're going to get it on the ballot and they're going to get it passed and the state of Ohio isn't going to get to say where the money goes," Mr. Zonak said in an interview.

"Why doesn't the legislature enact a law stating that we can bring (slot machines) to the racetracks and the legislators can say where the money goes, which is a very important thing for Ohio due to the economy," he said.

"And some of it should go back in to boost the horseracing industry," he added, noting the gambling companies' latest proposed constitutional amendment wouldn't include racetracks.

"And that's ridiculous," he said. "It won't help horseracing and when they get it on the ballot they can structure it anyway they want to structure it. That's why I think the state of Ohio needs to step forward."

OSRC Commissioner Tom Zaino authored a memo outlining the legal basis for the legislature to statutorily permit slot machines at racetracks without amending the constitution.

Since there is a risk the courts could determine slots machines at racetracks violate a constitutional prohibition against lottery operation, the General Assembly could empower a state agency to operate and regulate the devices, he says in the memo.

"In this way, constitutional problems are avoided, there would be no need to amend Ohio's constitution in order to have legal use of slot machines and/or other gaming, and the state could maximize tax revenue and regulation of gambling," he said.

Mr. Zonak said the commission is in the process of fleshing out the proposal to project how much revenue would be generated and how it could be appropriated, he said.

The commission is acting independently on the proposal, he said. "We're looking after the horseracing industry. That's what we were put here to do and this is a way to help it."

Rep. Clayton Luckie (D-Dayton), who sits on the House Finance & Appropriations Committee that is currently deliberating over the biennial budget (HB 1), said the time has come to legalize gambling in Ohio.

Ohioans already leave the state in droves to spend their money in casinos in neighboring states, which have all permitted some form of expanded gambling, he said in a recent interview.

"I think our kids and our services are really being hurt by not having full course gambling in Ohio. If we do it smart, successfully, and wisely, it will be the best thing for Ohio because our citizens are leaving and we want to keep them here," he said. "I believe you can be responsible when you gamble and by having our citizens go outside of our borders, we have no responsibility."

Rep. Luckie said he would like to see slot machines at the state's racetracks, as well as eight separate casinos that would directly benefit the "Big 8" school districts.

Mr. Zonak said in addition to gamblers leaving the state for casinos, horsemen are crossing the borders to race at facilities that offer much larger purses, thanks to their expanded gambling options.

While the commission registered 1,100 thoroughbred racehorses in 2001, last year there were less than 200, he said. Wagering at Ohio tracks has declined by about 32% in the last five years.

Meanwhile, Magna Entertainment Corp., which owns Thistledown near Cleveland, along with several other well-known tracks in the country, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last week. Moreover, River Downs in Cincinnati nearly canceled racing dates this season before deciding to give it one more year, he said.

MAGAZINE SAYS OHIO TOPS FOR BUSINESS FACILITY GROWTH; NEWSPAPER FINDS OHIO CITIES ATOP RANKINGS FOR ONGOING JOB LOSSES

Ohio is at the vanguard of a national trend of job losses but continues to score well in one magazine's ratings for new and expanded commercial facilities.

For the third year in a row and the seventh time since 1993, Ohio was awarded the "Governor's Cup" by *Site Selection* Magazine, Gov. Ted Strickland announced Monday.

"This award serves as an important reminder that our commitment to phasing in comprehensive tax reforms, while investing in sustainable sectors of the economy, is positioning Ohio for recovery and long-term economic growth," the governor said in a news release.

Along with the overall award for business facility investment in 2008, as tracked by the magazine's New Plant database, the state saw 12 of its cities secure top 10 rankings based on their size.

Dayton, for instance was ranked number one among "mid-sized metropolitan areas with populations between 200,000 and one million," the state reported.

Site Selection magazine regularly recognizes Ohio for its facilities development despite its relatively difficult economic struggles, which are due in part to the state's historic manufacturing base. Ohio officials previously applauded the receipt of the Governor's Cup in 1993, 1994, 1995, 2003, 2006, and 2007.

Yet other recent economic surveys indicate Ohio remains at the bottom of state rankings when it comes to jobs.

Late last year, MBG Information Services of Washington, D.C. said in a report based on federal statistics said Ohio was second only to Michigan in terms of the number of jobs lost since 2000, as the state bled 213,300 jobs over the period.

And on Monday, American City Business Journals Inc., the publisher of *Business First* newspapers, reported that Dayton and Toledo were first and third, respectively, in terms of consecutive quarters of job losses. Dayton was the worst by far, with 32 consecutive quarters of job losses, the business publication company said in its report based on U.S. government data.

Site Selection magazine bases its rankings of "new corporate location projects" that either: involve a capital investment of at least \$1 million; create at least 50 new jobs or add at least 20,000 sq. ft. of new floor area.

Ohio won the 2009 award with 503 projects, according to the magazine. Texas ranked second with 497 projects, followed by Michigan (296), Pennsylvania (290) and North Carolina (245). Ohio placed more cities in the 10 metropolitan and "micropolitan" categories than any other state.

"As with Ohio's previous Governor's Cup wins, the 2008 award demonstrates that companies will invest in those industrial states that are taking the steps needed to be competitive, especially in today's economic context," *Site Selection* Editor Mark Arend said.

"It is not enough to say your state is 'pro-business.' Site selectors are looking for specific measures to be in place, and Ohio is delivering."

TUESDAY, MARCH 10 2009

WHETHER 'FEES' OR 'TAXES,' REVENUE BOOSTS IN TRANSPORTATION BUDGET DRAW FIRE FROM SENATE GOP

Senate Republicans hearing Gov. Ted Strickland's \$7.6 billion transportation budget Tuesday questioned the millions of dollars in fee increases he proposes to reduce reliance on scarce general revenue fund money.

Director Henry Guzman of the Ohio Department of Public Safety delivered an overview of fee boosts in the two-year spending plan (HB 2) affecting his agency to the Senate Highways & Transportation Committee.

And Sen. Stephen Buehrer (R-Delta) prefaced his first question with a comment that "the tax increases" were at the top of his list.

"Save your wind in correcting my vocabulary," Sen. Buehrer advised, making clear his definition of fees.

He and others targeted a plan to increase a total of seven driver, motor vehicle, and certificate of title abstract fees from the current \$2 to \$8, raising an estimated \$25 million annually.

Director Guzman said 95% of the requests for abstracts come from insurance companies for issuing policies.

Sen. Buehrer asked: "Isn't it fair to say that once your system is built and established ... there's really no cost to the department of providing these abstracts?"

Mr. Guzman responded: "There probably is some cost, but in terms of setting it up I'd say you are correct."

Sen. Buehrer said, "That's simply going to get passed along to Ohio consumers."

Director Guzman said the current abstract fee of \$2 compares with a national average among states of \$8.35. Connecticut charges the highest fee of \$20. "The other states around us would still be higher than us," he said.

He acknowledged the proposal was "a revenue raiser" to offset declines in funding, and to allow other departments to use general revenue funds on which some public safety divisions had relied.

Revenue from the \$6 increase would be used to remove from the GRF the Emergency Management Agency, Office of Criminal Justice Services, and the Ohio Investigative Unit. It also would provide a dedicated source of funding for the Emergency Medical Services and Ohio Homeland Security divisions.

Sen. Gary Cates (R-West Chester) said the transportation budget was "replete with any number of huge fee increases."

He singled out a proposed new fee of \$10 for motorists who are late in renewing their driver licenses and vehicle registrations. The levy is expected to generate \$21 million annually, part of a \$106 million package of boosts to temporarily offset a State Highway Patrol budget shortfall through about fiscal year 2013.

Sen. Cates suggested that if people process their renewals on time, the agency would find itself still facing a shortfall.

Director Guzman said the budget anticipated that possibility, and that the revenue estimate built in was conservative.

Sen. Cates suggested that if motorists face late renewal penalties, so should the state. He cited an email from a constituent whose mailed check for a vehicle registration renewal was not cashed for a month. The motorist was unable to reach the Bureau of Motor Vehicles via telephone, and the senator's office ultimately intervened.

"First of all, I'd like to have this incident looked into," Sen. Cates said.

"If we're going to penalize the motoring public for being late, what's the penalty for the BMV? Shouldn't we hold your agency to the same standard as the public? Timeliness is timeliness," he said.

Mr. Guzman pledged to follow up on the complaint.

"One of the main goals I've had is to reduce the bureaucracy in the department ... (but) things will fail, and in that instance I believe it was a glitch in the computer system," he said. "We have major upgrades in the system that are being implemented as we speak."

The director said the state also is required to check information against three national databases, and they occasionally go down as well. "We're committed to improving our operations," he said.

Also drawing the panel's attention was a pilot program using automated cameras to nab speeders in construction zones along interstate highways. As with red light/speed cameras in cities, violators would face civil penalties. The House version of the bill would assess citations against a vehicle operator.

Chairman Thomas Patton (R-Strongsville) pointed out the proposal would require a trooper to view the camera image and determine if a violation had occurred. "If it takes an officer, why not have a trooper on the road using radar?" he asked.

Col. Richard Collins, the patrol superintendent, said he agreed with much of what the chairman said.

"The attitude has always been in the patrol that a marked patrol car in full view does act as an effective deterrent ... for any behavior we're trying to correct," Col. Collins said.

At the same time, he noted, the patrol was comparatively small when viewed against similar agencies in other states. He said contractors typically pay troopers who currently work in construction zones.

Chairman Patton suggested there was a lack of evidence about whether municipal camera systems reduce - or increase - traffic accidents.

Director Guzman said a City of Columbus study of its camera system reflected a decrease in the number of motorists running red lights, with no corresponding increase in rear-end collisions as motorists brake at intersections.

Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland), the ranking minority member, questioned the safety benefit of a provision in the bill that would require motorists to turn on vehicle headlights whenever the windshield wipers were in use.

The department said the measure was added through a House committee amendment.

"So a motorist can receive a ticket if it's raining and they don't have their headlights on? I think that's an unnecessary burden," Sen. Turner said.

The provision was added to the budget bill at the request of Rep. Peter Ujvagi (D-Toledo), who chairs the House Finance Transportation & Justice Subcommittee.

Sen. Turner also sought information about the types of investigations the department conducts into liquor law violations, especially in urban areas. She asked if public safety works with the Department of Commerce about "over-saturation" of liquor permits in cities.

"We will continue to work with all problem permit premises in making sure the Department of Commerce is aware of them. We're the enforcement ... we're not involved in issuing permits," Director Guzman said.

On related matters:

- Chairman Patton wondered if the General Assembly should transfer food stamp enforcement to another agency, given a reduction in the number of investigators from 24 to seventeen.
- Sen. Buehrer asked how much money the state could save by requiring only a single license plate on a vehicle. Mr. Guzman estimated the savings at \$1.4 million annually, but said such a change would meet opposition from law enforcement.

SEBATE COMMITTEE HEARING

State & Local Government & Veterans Affairs

SB 7 FRAUD REPORTING (Wagoner) To require the Auditor of State to establish a fraud-reporting system for residents and public employees to file anonymous complaints of fraud and misuse of public funds by public offices or officials. (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

CONTINUED

Tim Keen, on behalf of Auditor of State Mary Taylor, offered testimony in favor of the bill. The bill would help make more people aware of whom to contact if they suspect or witness fraud, which is very important in hard economic times, he said.

"This legislation is a preventative measure that codifies a very important process, and makes other reasonable statutory changes to improve the likelihood that fraud, waste and abuse is detected and reported in the earliest stages," he said. It will not bring an end to fraud, but would help protect taxpayer's dollars.

Sen. Ray Miller said he was concerned that the bill does not go along with the current desire to control costs and is worried that these actions could be taken out by other agencies, such as the attorney general. "We work very closely with other agencies as appropriate," Mr. Keen said. If a situation needs to be passed on to another entity we will do that. Since fraud has to do with the misuse of finances of public offices, it seems like it is properly housed in the auditor's office, he said.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 2009

STATE AUDITOR, BUDGET DIRECTOR DISAGREE OVER SERIOUSNESS OF FISCAL DATA DELAY

It didn't rise to the level of a Celebrity Death Match, but the state's auditor and budget director presented lawmakers with starkly different assessments Wednesday regarding the implications of a delayed financial report.

Republican State Auditor Mary Taylor told the Senate Government Oversight Committee, which convened a special hearing on the matter, that the continued lack of financial statements from the Office of Budget and Management could lead to her declaring the state's books "unauditable" for the fiscal year that ended June 30.

Auditor Taylor made public her concerns with the delay, which has been attributed to the new comprehensive state accounting system, last week.

Office of Budget and Management Director Pari Sabety detailed issues related to the Ohio Administrative Knowledge System, saying its ongoing, multi-year rollout is the culprit behind the lag in getting final fiscal data to the auditor. Among other things, she said it is taking longer than expected for OBM staff to confirm OAKS data for completeness and accuracy.

Nevertheless, she said there's no reason for policymakers to worry about hidden implications for the upcoming biennium budget, as Gov. Ted Strickland's administration continues to work directly with the legislature on a regular basis in maintaining a transparent system of revenue and expenditure reporting.

For the committee chairman, Sen. Jon Husted (R-Kettering), the question of the day was: "Is it a big deal or not?"

The chairman and other GOP members expressed concerns about not having all the fiscal information possible before passing the next biennium budget measure (HB 1).

Auditor Taylor said the OBM documentation she's waiting for to complete the FY 2008 audit of state finances contains "meaningful and valuable" information, such as "accrued liabilities and receipts," that aren't currently available. The data will help provide a more complete picture of the state's financial health, she said.

Ms. Taylor said her office warned OBM after the FY 2007 audit about issues that could delay the "timely completion" of the FY 2008 financial statements.

On questioning from the panelists, the auditor said that if her staff gets to the point where they have to stop the process due to the lack of paperwork, she will declare the state "unauditable" as her office has done to dozens of local government entities that didn't meet statutory reporting deadlines.

Director Sabety took issue with Ms. Taylor's comments and said the current delay is in line or even shorter than other states have experienced while transitioning to similar comprehensive computerized accounting systems.

"Despite these challenges (with OAKS), I contest the auditor's assertion that Ohio's books are 'unauditable,'" she said. "The data is there, and it can be audited. Indeed, the auditor of state was working together with OBM as early as June 2008 to pull extended sampling data from the system to bolster audit testing and procedures."

"There is no doubt that the integrity of the state's financial statements is critical," Ms. Sabety concluded. "But I believe that it is a disservice to our state, the thousands of employees, bondholders, companies, citizens and others with a stake in our state's financial condition to turn simple reporting delays - delays that were expected and planned for over a year ago - into questions about Ohio's financial condition."

Ms. Taylor told Sen. Mark Wagoner (R-Ottawa Hills) that a failure to complete the annual state audit on time could jeopardize Ohio's bond rating.

Responding to a question from Sen. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), Ms. Sabety said the administration was not in a position to reverse or halt the implementation of OAKS when it took control of the state in 2007 because the first phases were already complete and Ohio had spent \$140 million on the new system.

When the lawmaker asked whether OBM would support a statutory deadline for the reporting of state financial documents to the auditor, the director noted that other "extraordinary circumstances" had also caused reporting delays, including the scandals at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation a few years ago.

Sen. Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati) said he found the word unauditably "inflammatory" given the auditor had not yet reached that determination.

Democrats also questioned why the term had not been bandied about following the BWC problems.

Behind the scenes, Democrats were also pointing to a delay in Ms. Taylor's campaign filings from 2004 in questioning whether the official was being hypocritical.

The Ohio Elections Commission twice found minor campaign filing violations against Ms. Taylor's House campaign committee that year following referrals from the Secretary of State's office, however no fines were issued after the campaign took corrective action.

Ms. Taylor declined comment, saying she wasn't aware of any past issues regarding OEC.

The auditor did respond to the suggestion that her criticisms of the administration are politically motivated and of Gov. Strickland's comment that her claims are "unnecessary and exaggerated."

"When I sent that letter, the financial statements for the state of Ohio had been delayed by 245 days. Every other government entity in the state of Ohio is held to a higher standard," Ms. Taylor said in an interview. "It is my obligation as an elected official to communicate with the public when we believe that we are being prevented from doing our job because we are not provided the information that we need in order to fulfill our statutory obligation."

NEW BALLOT PROPOSAL URGES FULL-SERVICE CASINOS IN FOUR CITIES

A new coalition of casino backers submitted language Wednesday for a proposed constitutional amendment that could lead to the development of full-service casinos in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus and Toledo.

The plan, backed and supported primarily by Penn National Gaming and Dan Gilbert, would provide \$600 million per year in tax revenues, supporters said.

The Ohio Jobs and Growth Committee submitted its plan to the Attorney General's office for certification of the petition language. If approved, backers will begin collecting signatures with the intent of placing the issue on the Nov. 3 ballot.

"We are confident that Ohio voters will recognize that this is far and away the best and fairest proposal for casino gaming they have been asked to approve," said Charlie Luken, who chairs the Ohio Jobs and Growth Committee.

"We have worked hard to create a proposal that benefits all Ohioans through their local governments and schools, and creates jobs and significant economic development at a time when Ohio's economy is most in need of a boost," he said.

The amendment dedicates 51% of tax revenues to counties and 34% of revenues to school districts. Additional revenues would be directed to casino host cities, the Ohio State Racing Commission, a casino control commission, law enforcement training and problem gambling and substance abuse programs.

A separate plan that proposes the use of slot machines at Ohio's horse tracks is also expected.

The proposed amendment would produce \$200 million in licensing fees, prompt \$1 billion in private investment and generate 20,000 jobs. The state licensing fees would be dedicated to job training and workforce development projects.

The annual tax revenue estimates are based on projections of \$1.8 billion in gross casino revenue, backers said.

Penn National operates 19 gaming facilities. Mr. Gilbert, chairman and founder of Quicken Loans, is majority owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

GOVERNOR'S ECONOMIC ADVISORS PREDICT UNEMPLOYMENT WILL REACH 9.7%

The unemployment rate in Ohio will continue rising to 9.7% in fiscal year 2010 before decreasing slightly the next year, the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors predicted in a report released late Wednesday.

Unemployment rose sharply to 8.8% in January, but the group of economists that periodically advises Gov. Ted Strickland predicted the rate would average 7.8% for FY 2009.

Strickland spokeswoman Amanda Wurst said the group indicated Ohio would experience continued economic challenges over the next year due to the surprisingly rapid pace of the national economic decline.

"Most agreed that a key issue is the health of the financial sector - specifically, the need for credit markets to return to a more normal state," she said in an email. "Overall, their view was that the impact of the federal Recovery Act will have a positive effect on the economy."

In addition, the council forecast Ohio real gross state product would drop -0.5% in FY 2009, -0.2% in FY 2010, and 2.1% in FY 2011 and personal income would decrease 1.3% in FY 2009 and 0.7% in 2010.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COUNCIL CLEARS BWC BUDGET, WEIGHS INDEPENDENT STUDY AND OVERALL MISSION

Members of a new committee created to focus on Bureau of Workers' Compensation issues signed off on changes to the agency's budget Wednesday before pondering how aggressively to assert its charge.

The question of whether to spend an estimated \$500,000 to hire an independent consultant to conduct a separate review of BWC operations prompted discussion into the Workers' Compensation Council's mission.

The committee commenced business by electing Sen. Steve Buehrer (R-Delta) as chairman. Rep. Tom Letson (D-Warren) was chosen to serve as vice chairman.

Members heard brief testimony from BWC Administrator Marsha Ryan and Industrial Commission Chairman Gary DiCeglio that summarized their previous testimony on the agencies' respective budgets (HB 15 & HB 16). The council recommended both measures for passage with little comment.

Rep. Vernon Sykes (D-Akron), chairman of the House Finance & Appropriations Committee, told members that his panel would duly process the bills prior to consideration by the whole chamber.

During discussion about the council's mission, members debated how to handle a statutory requirement to hire an independent actuary to review BWC's valuation requirements by September.

Chairman Buehrer said the bureau had just completed its annual study, adding some members suggested it would be redundant to spend \$500,000 for a similar report.

Rep. Lynn Wachtmann (R-Napoleon) said it was important for the council to obtain independent information to assess the workers' compensation system.

"If we do not, to me it would by and large eliminate the need for this council," he said. "I would hope the council sticks to its statutory duties."

Administrator Ryan said the bureau hired independent actuarial consultant Oliver Wyman to conduct "a very thorough analysis." Contracting another firm would be "pretty much a direct duplication," but she suggested the panel could save money by hiring a consultant to analyze the BWC's report.

Citing the economic recession, Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Youngstown) said, "If we're going to spend half a million dollars right off the bat, I think that's going to be difficult to justify."

The council adopted a motion to delay the September deadline for the report to allow more time to decide how to proceed. Ms. Ryan agreed to ask the consultant to deliver a presentation on its findings during the next meeting.

Members also disagreed over whether the council should proactively generate legislative recommendations or simply review existing proposals that would impact the workers' compensation system.

Rep. Dan Dodd (D-Licking Twp.), chairman of the House Insurance Committee, said the panel should adhere to the enabling statute that authorizes it to review pertinent legislation, but not get involved in the daily operations of the bureau.

Referring to suggestions to review BWC staff's proposed changes on the Drug Free Workplace programs, he said, "I'm not sure there's an argument that can be made that that affects the soundness of the system."

Rep. Wachtmann argued for a more expansive approach.

"I see great value in this council using its broader authority to assess what's going on," he said. Limiting the scope of the council's mission "could result in a lot of bills being introduced just so we can have the discussion, and I don't think that's a very good outcome either."

Speaking in an interview, Chairman Buehrer said he thought scrutiny of the group rating program was well within the council's authority.

"I certainly am going to be reaching out to not only members of the committee, but to members of the public who care about these issues to see what role we ought to take," he said. "I don't want to be just an extra wheel on the bus, but I do think this was framed to have an important role."

LAWMAKERS CALL FOR EFFICIENCY REVIEW; NEW 'PIGLET BOOK' HIGHLIGHTS SPENDING CONCERNS

Just as two organizations released a report questioning a significant amount of state spending, a group of Republican lawmakers announced a new push for a state panel to recommend efficiencies in government purchasing and operations.

The proposal (HB 66) creates a 12-member State Government Efficiency Commission to develop ideas to restructure government, cut waste and expand the private sector economy.

Rep. Kris Jordan (R-Delaware) said his bill would help weed out unnecessary spending.

At a joint news conference with legislators backing the bill, the Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions and Citizens Against Government Waste released the 2009 "Ohio Piglet Book," which identifies what the groups said are questionable expenses.

The institute's David Hansen said the report highlights a series of expenditures that public officials should scrutinize, particularly in light of the state's declining revenue picture.

"Ohio's elected officials should always spend tax dollars effectively and efficiently," Mr. Hansen said. "In times of budget deficits, it is especially important that legislators and the governor make every effort to ensure that money is spent only on those government programs which are truly needed. They have yet to make this effort in Ohio."

The book questions the use of public money to support Third Frontier business development projects, and also questions the release of money to support the openings of a Kroger in Lucas County and a Chuck E. Cheese in Lima.

The report also raises concerns about support for stadiums and cultural facilities, the state racing commission, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and public broadband development initiatives.

Mr. Hansen said the groups aren't suggesting that the highlighted spending is inappropriate, but only questions whether government and taxpayers should have a role in supporting the programs.

"The Ohio Piglet Book should be a wake-up call to taxpayers and legislators that state spending is out of control," CAGW's David Williams said. "The Ohio Piglet has identified the excessive spending; it is now time to get rid of it."

HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING

Economic Development

HR 20 CITIES TASK FORCE (Patten) To create the Compact With Ohio Cities Task Force to help cities compete for residents and jobs, and to stimulate economic growth. (1st Hearing-Sponsor)

CONTINUED

Rep. Patten told the panel the resolution is designed to create a forum for cities to develop ways to better themselves.

He said the panel will recommend the best ways for governments to provide services to citizens. "By sharing their best practices, cities across the state would be able to become more economically sound," he said. "Cities realize that now is the time for fiscal responsibility and frugality. This is a way for them to learn from the mistakes and the triumphs of others to achieve long-term financial stability."

The sponsor added that he is willing to be flexible in terms of the panel's end date that was included in the as-introduced version of the proposal.

A handful of lawmakers raised concerns that the resolution seeks to do something that the Ohio Department of Development should already be doing. Mr. Patten responded that the plan creates a framework for discussions.

Rep. Baker said she's more interested in a panel that is focused on action rather than simply reviewing issues. Rep. Hall said many of these issues have been discussed. "I'm afraid we're doing something we've already done," he said.

Rep. Lundy said the panel would have a more defined role, and would have more continuity than similar proceedings. Rep. Murray, who joined the legislature after leaving municipal government, said local officials would welcome the process. He said the proposal would create a tool for broad conversation about services.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12 2009

COURT CLERKS ASK SENATE TO RAISE VEHICLE TITLE FEES JULY 1; SEAT BELT, SPEED CAMERA PLANS DISPUTED

Ninety minutes into a Senate panel's latest hearing on Gov. Ted Strickland's \$7.6 billion transportation budget Thursday, Chairman Thomas Patton (R-Strongsville) brought out his egg timer.

"Don't take this as an intimidating factor, but try to summarize," Sen. Patton told a witness as he placed the sand-filled glass tube next to his nameplate.

The Senate Highways and Transportation Committee wrapped up public testimony on the two-year spending plan. Proposed amendments are due at his office no later than noon Monday.

The committee is scheduled to meet after session Tuesday to begin consideration of changes in the House-passed measure (HB 2).

Chairman Patton advised a long list of witnesses Thursday to keep testimony within five minutes - thus the egg timer. "Please be as concise as possible," he said.

Among other testimony:

Trucks: The Ohio Trucking Association opposed an increase from the current \$2 to \$8 in the fee the Bureau of Motor Vehicles charges, mainly to insurance companies, for abstracts of a driver's traffic record. "We (also) have some concerns about the speed cameras that are going to be placed in the construction zones," said Larry Davis, the association president. Other concerns involved the proposed creation of local Transportation Innovation Authorities, and expanded use of tolls to finance certain road projects.

CCAO: The County Commissioners Association of Ohio submitted an amendment that would keep at the current \$5 the abstract fee charged to counties that self-insure or are members of joint self-insurance programs. Brad Cole, senior policy analyst, said such counties routinely obtain the reports when employees are hired, and periodically check driving records. "Given the difficult financial times local governments are experiencing, we believe that political subdivisions and joint self-insurance pools that use motor vehicle records to implement active safe driver loss control prevention programs should be exempt from the increase in fees provided for in this bill," Mr. Cole said.

He said the CCAO also supports an increase in permissive authority to levy a motor vehicle license tax. Counties were authorized to impose a \$5 permissive license tax in 1967, and were granted authority to levy two additional \$5 taxes in 1987. "Given the state's apparent desire to partner with counties on transportation projects, an increase in permissive authority would arguably be in the interest of both counties and the state," Mr. Cole said.

Ohio Salt: Mark Mitchell, plant manager of the Morton Salt Co. mine operations in Lake County, asked the Senate to remove a provision that would exempt from the Buy Ohio program the Ohio Department of Transportation's purchase of road salt. The program provides a preference for selection of Ohio firms so long as at least two submit bids.

"In the case of state purchases of road salt, the two companies that produce Ohio-mined rock salt, Morton and Cargill, are currently eligible for the in-state preference," Mr. Mitchell said. ODOT is seeking an exemption from the Buy Ohio requirements after a harsh winter in which it and political subdivisions had trouble obtaining supplies and encountered sharply higher prices when they were available.

"The Buy Ohio program has been in place for over 25 years now and, in my opinion, makes good sense," Mr. Mitchell said. "As long as the state is getting a fair price, why shouldn't it look to Ohio businesses first when awarding state contracts?"

OEPA, ODNR DIRECTORS DEFEND FEE INCREASES TO SUPPORT BUDGETS

Directors of the Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Thursday assured members of a House budget subcommittee that proposed fee increases are absolutely necessary in light of general revenue fund pressures and their continued ability to provide continued health and safety services.

DNR Director Sean Logan told members of the Agriculture and Development Subcommittee that targeted fee increases have been proposed to move the department's regulatory functions away from GRF dollars.

With the continued erosion of general fund allocations, he said the department could no longer protect funding for oil and gas and coal programs without the imposing and increase of user fees. An energy resources extraction fee would provide a dedicated funding source for the Division of Mineral Resources Management to help the division meet expectations of protecting human and environmental health and safety.

Mr. Logan reported that oil and gas and coal permitting activity has increased demand on regulatory functions. He noted that during the past five years, permits to drill for oil and gas have nearly doubled (681 in 2002 to 1,322 in 2007) and activity for coal permitting was up more than 200% in 2008 compared to 2007. "Looking to the near future, this is not a sustainable pattern to ensure the efficient and thorough review of applications submitted by the two industries," he said.

Crossing the jurisdictional line from DNR and the Ohio EPA are proposed increases in construction and demolition debris (C&DD) and municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal fees. The budget proposed an increase in MSW fees from \$3.50 to \$4.75 per ton and from \$1.70 to \$4.40 per ton for C&DD tipping fees. Revenue generated from the increase in the MSW fee would be \$16.9 million with \$13.5 million annually of the total going to the EPA for regulatory purposes while \$3.4 million would go to the DNR for the Soil and Water District Fund. The C&DD fees would produce \$11 million with \$1.8 going to the EPA and \$9.2 to the DNR, again to be dedicated to the Soil and Water District Fund.

EPA Director Chris Korleski told the panel that during the past 10 years, there has been a slow and steady increase in out-of-state waste - 20% of the MSW and 50% of the C&DD waste. He added that even with the proposed increase in state disposal fees, the overall cost per ton of both types of waste would still generally be lower and/or competitive with neighboring states. "Without these fee increases, Ohio EPA will not be able to maintain current operations," he declared.

Mr. Korleski continued that without fee increases, some vitally important areas of protecting human health and the environment could suffer. Specifically, he said the Division of Drinking and Ground Water would have to substantially reduce its oversight of Ohio's public water systems and will be unable to ensure compliance with all safe drinking water requirements. And, he said, the Division of Surface Water's ability to evaluate stream health and develop restoration plans that aid in stream cleanups will be impaired.

Additionally, Mr. Korleski said that permitting in both the Air Pollution Control and Surface Water divisions would also slow down significantly due to a lack of resources "I am very concerned that without these fee increases, some of our progress made in permitting efficiency could be lost," the EPA director said.

DNR's Logan said the department is committed to working for both the oil and gas and the coal industries to determine if there is a better mechanism for dedicated funding different than what has been proposed in the budget. He said the oil and gas industry has "stepped up to the plate" and agreed that there is a need for more resources and every aspect of the industry will be examined. Accordingly, he said the department is recommending that the oil and gas fee language be removed from the budget bill based on a plan to bring forth a stand-alone package of legislative updates to the state's oil and gas program, including a range of targeted items to address the division's funding needs, in the coming weeks.

Mr. Korleski said the budget reflects a lean budget with the fiscal year 2010 amount of approximately \$206 million reflecting a 2% reduction from the current year with the 2011 allocation of \$208 million up 1% percent that would still be a 1% decrease when compared to FY 2009. He noted if passed as presented, the EPA budget would contain no GRF money making it all that more imperative that some of the existing fees be increased to support operations of the EPA.

The EPA director also noted an increase in the surcharge from \$1 to \$3.30 for each new tire sold in the state with funds to continue to be used to abate abandoned scrap tire sites and the additional funds generated to replace the GRF cash transfer that is currently funding the motor vehicle emissions testing program. The Ohio EPA has a pending request for proposal for the

continuation of the testing program due to federal requirements for moderate non-attainment areas. The new RFP is more broadly written, allowing for applicants to submit testing program that can be either centralized or decentralized.

Mr. Korleski outlined EPA priority projects that he said enhances Ohio's environment and the agency's ability to promote environmentally responsible economic development. These included combining the air permit-to-install and air permit-to-operate into a single permit; reorganizing the Division of Surface Water and 401 Water Quality Certification Program to better accommodate the high volume of applications being received for construction related projects in wetland areas; increasing permitting efficiency to issue multiple environmentally-protective permits to large economic projects; upgrading on-line technology to allow for a more efficient way of submitting permit applications and reports via the eBusiness center; completing numerous site specific clean-ups; awarding close to \$750 million in low-cost financing for a variety of wastewater infrastructure projects geared toward water quality improvements; and creating two new voluntary programs - Tox-minus and emission reduction credit banking.

Director Logan also reported that the department has continued to reduce its own Division of Soil and Water Conservation spending in order to keep GRF funding going towards the state's matching grants to local soil and water districts. He said any change in land use impacts local soil and water resources and the local districts are charged with mitigating such impacts. He said in order to protect the conservation efforts, the C&DD and MSW fee increases are necessary. With existing fees, he noted that the C&DD funding stream provides only about 15% of funding for the soil and water districts with the new fees increasing that amount to 37.5% of the necessary funding with the state match used to leverage more than \$23 million annually in federal funding for Ohio's landowners.

Mr. Logan also noted a proposed fee increase on dam owners to better reflect the amount of time inspectors spend on-site at the dam. He added the fee structure would take into account the size of the structure and potential downstream impact if the dam were to fail.

Other proposals outlined by Director Logan includes a "nominal" fee on drinking water wells, a requirement for non-resident landowners to obtain out-of-state hunting licenses and making it more convenient for landowners to check harvested deer and turkeys. The department expects to have implemented by 2011 as new web-based customer relationship management system to allow hunters, including landowners, to check their harvests over the internet, telephone or at a license vendor outlet.

Testimony related to fee increases, especially those involving C&DD, was presented on behalf landfill owners and their representatives. Michael Cypher, general legal counsel for the Construction and Demolition Association of Ohio, called the fee increase drastic and added that would provide no additional oversight over C&DD facilities. Additionally, he said the fee hike would render Ohio C&DD industry uncompetitive with neighboring states and devastate construction, demolition and redevelopment industries already hit hard by the current economic recession.

HOUSE DETAILS BUDGET TIMETABLE, CANCELS NEXT WEEK'S SESSIONS

The House is expected to send the biennial budget bill to the Senate during the week of April 20, according to a tentative schedule released Thursday by House Finance Chairman Vernon Sykes.

The House also Thursday announced that full sessions scheduled for Tuesday, March 17 and Wednesday, March 18 have been canceled.

Mr. Sykes (D-Akron) said House Finance subcommittees are scheduled to complete their public hearings next week and full committee hearings are scheduled for the weeks of March 24 and March 31.

Neither the full committee nor the full House will meet the week of April 6. The full committee will meet the week of April 13, when no floor sessions will be held.

A substitute version of the budget (HB 1) is expected to be released on April 14, which will be followed by public hearings the next two days. A committee vote is tentative planned for April 21, followed soon thereafter by a floor vote.

LAWMAKERS SEEKING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT ON ELECTION CHANGES; DISTRICT DRAWING 'CONTEST' TO BEGIN

Key players in upcoming legislative debates regarding Ohio election laws said they are looking to find common ground on issues that have divided the parties in the past.

Lawmakers who have focused on the issues told local officials attending a two-day state election conference Thursday that election policy remains ripe for discussion.

Sen. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) said the Senate is "back at it" in considering election laws, noting that Gov. Ted Strickland vetoed the legislature's last attempt (SB380, 127th General Assembly) at adjusting the system.

Rep. Dan Stewart (D-Columbus), who chairs the House Elections & Ethics Committee, said the bill from last session was "a moving target" that was considered in a rushed lame duck session. He said lawmakers now have more time to consider issues more fully, with the goal of drawing bipartisan support.

Similarly, Sen. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) said it is important that the issues be considered in a thorough, deliberative process that provides time to build consensus and review the impacts of recent federal actions. "We want to spend the time necessary to get things right," she said.

Rep. Robert Mecklenborg (R-Green Township) said he's expecting a lot of action on the issue this session, noting that lawmakers need to keep in mind the differences between the varying types of local election boards.

Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner said the prospects for bipartisan agreement on the issues depend on the parties' willingness to work together.

Sen. Seitz cautioned that local officials need to understand the budgetary pressures that lawmakers are facing, saying now isn't the time to be pushing a "Cadillac" system. "Expensive reforms are almost certainly not in the cards," he said.

Rep. Stewart sounded the same warnings, noting that every new dollar forwarded to elections efforts has to be taken away from other programs, including human services and law enforcement.

Sen. Fedor said many positive changes can be made without bringing new costs. "Some of it is just common sense," she said.

Rep. Mecklenborg added that lawmakers need to also consider the impact that changes will have on local officials. "Times are so tough, we have to be very careful about our mandates on local boards," he said.

While saying Senate Republicans aren't looking to disenfranchise anyone who is legitimately qualified to vote, Sen. Seitz also raised the prospect of tightening voter identification requirements to match the stricter standards in Indiana.

Secretary Brunner said she considers it "unlikely" that Ohio will move to an Indiana-style identification program, saying the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on the case isn't as clear as some would suggest.

If, however, that standard was applied, she said the Secretary of State should be tasked with providing all voters qualifying identification at no cost.

State Republicans criticized Ms. Brunner for having an event that features Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, who the party said ignored requests to review irregularities before the last election.

"Jennifer Brunner is wasting valuable tax dollars to bring in a fellow left-wing activist so he can do a sales pitch for her partisan agenda," Ohio Republican Party Chairman Kevin DeWine said.

"It seems we could find better ways to spend our money than flying in another secretary of state who's generated nothing but criticism and controversy and who so far still hasn't figured out his own state's election."

Redistricting 'Contest': Separately, Secretary Brunner and Rep. Stewart welcomed the upcoming announcement of a contest that will allow Ohioans to draw and submit their own congressional districts.

The process organized by the League of Women Voters of Ohio is designed to get people interested in the process.

Through the program, people will be able to use 2000 Census data to restructure Ohio's 18 congressional districts, with the goal of having compact and competitive districts.

The league's Linda Lalley said that safer districts tend to produce lawmakers who have more extreme political views, making it more difficult for them to negotiate with members of the other party when they get into office.

TWO UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR ROBERTS SENATE SEAT; SENATE GOP PRIMARY BREWING

A former state lawmaker and a former candidate for the legislature are vying for an upcoming appointment to fill a vacancy in the Ohio Senate.

Former state Rep. Fred Strahorn and Victor Harris, who ran for the House last year, are looking to replace former Sen. Tom Roberts in the 5th District.

Mr. Strahorn served in the House from 2001 through 2008 and currently works as vice-president of governmental affairs at the Ohio United Way.

Mr. Harris is a speechwriter for the U.S. Army's Office of the Chief, Public Affairs. He lost in the 2008 primary for the 40th District seat, which is now held by Rep. Roland Winburn (D-Dayton).

Mr. Roberts, who is now a member of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, has endorsed Mr. Strahorn for the appointment.

The Senate Democratic Caucus is scheduled to select the new senator next week.

Senate GOP Primary: Separately, a former and current lawmaker are making preparations to face off in a 2010 primary for the 7th Senate District seat currently held by Sen. Bob Schuler (R-Cincinnati).

Scheduled to face off in the race are Rep. Shannon Jones (R-Springboro) and former Rep. Michelle Schneider.

Ms. Schneider Thursday highlighted the success of a recent fund-raiser that drew support from a number of southwest Ohio Republicans.

Sen. Schuler cannot seek re-election due to term limits.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13 2009

OBM DIRECTOR TEMPERS FY '09 BALANCE HOPES DESPITE MEDICAID BAILOUT

Although the Office of Budget and Management still projects that the state will end FY 2009 in the black despite a continued shortfall in tax receipts, Director Pari Sabety said Friday that the recent receipt of \$350 million in federal Medicaid assistance doesn't mean Ohio coffers will be awash in cash come June 30.

"We're drawing a fair amount of that into non-GRF funds," Ms. Sabety said of the additional federal Medicaid matching money announced this week.

"Obviously, it's going to help us in FY 2009," she said. "Our (Medicaid) caseloads are running above projections, however because we have been slow to roll out a number of our expansions we've management to keep the budget number, the spending, under our targets or at our targets."

Still, Ms. Sabety said that doesn't mean the \$350 million can be added to the estimated year-end fund balance of \$387 million that is noted in OBM's Monthly Financial Report for February.

That's because the year-end balance projection won't be completely updated, even though revenue estimates have, until the biennium budget process nears its end, Ms. Sabety said. "We typically do not revise that except when we move into conference committee."

Along with helping the Medicaid situation into the next biennium budget cycle, the federal stimulus measure's temporary increase in the FMAP percentage of state reimbursements is expected to further bolster the FY 2009 books.

POLICY GROUP RECOMMENDS OHIO CONSTITUTION ALLOCATE 20% OF GAS TAX REVENUE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

A nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization says Ohio voters should be asked to approve a constitutional amendment to allocate 20% of the state's gasoline tax revenues toward increasing public transportation services.

Creating a dedicated source of funding for public transit leads a list of seven recommendations contained in a report that Policy Matters Ohio in Cleveland released this week

"Federally, 18 percent of the federal gas tax goes to transit. In Ohio, zero gas tax revenues go towards public transit due to a constitutional prohibition," the report said.

"Ohio should amend the state constitution to allow 20 percent of Ohio's gas tax revenues to go into an Ohio Transit Trust Fund to develop a 21st Century public transportation program," it said.

Release of the analysis comes as the General Assembly weighs Gov. Ted Strickland's \$7.6 billion, two-year transportation budget (HB 2) for the Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Safety.

Relying on the National Transit Database of nine large Ohio transit systems, Policy Matters found that the number of public transit rides taken by Ohioans averaged an increase of five percent during a year ending in May 2008. During the same period, the number of vehicles operated declined six percent, and the number of miles traveled dropped eight percent.

The same high gasoline prices that increased demand for public transportation also forced transit agencies to cut service levels because of increased operating costs.

The report found Ohio ranks 40th in the nation in state public transit spending as a percentage of total state transportation dollars. Ohio spends less than half of the amount spent in Indiana, and less than three percent of Pennsylvania's expenditure on public transportation.

Policy Matters said public transit systems in Ohio rely on local sales and property taxes.

The report also found:

- State spending for public transportation has declined 48% over the last decade, adjusted for transportation-related inflation.
- Ohio ranks fourth among states for total carbon emissions.
- Every \$1.25 million spent on public transportation projects creates 51 jobs, nearly 19% more than new road or bridge projects create.
- Eighty-three percent of Ohio commuters drive in their car alone to work.

Report author Amanda Woodrum, policy liaison at Policy Matters, said investing in mass transit during the recession could be part of an economic infusion.

"When compared with private cars, public transit saves energy, spurs economic development, employs people, assists firms and workers by lowering the cost of commuting, reduces suburban sprawl, increases urban vitality, reduces traffic congestion, and is far less harmful to the environment," Ms. Woodrum said in a news release.

STATES TAKE VARIED APPROACHES TO DISBURSING FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDS

While Ohio policymakers are still haggling over the best way to appropriate the billions in federal stimulus money headed the state's way, a national survey of other states' methodologies indicates a wide variety of solutions in that regard.

As Gov. Ted Strickland has done in Ohio, the most common feature of the process among the 46 states that have taken steps to organize their disbursements is the creation of websites to track the spending and field project requests, the National Conference of State Legislatures reported Friday.

In terms of continued oversight of the money, the approaches are more varied.

In Ohio, a substantial amount of the federal money is currently proposed to be appropriated through two similar vehicles: a separate bill with \$1.78 billion in appropriations that cleared the Senate this week (SB 2); and amendments to the transportation budget (HB 2) entailing \$2.26 billion in a variety of spending areas.

Reflecting some policy differences between the GOP-controlled Senate and the Democrat-run House, the Senate measure contains reporting requirements while the House bill adds audit and Inspector General oversight.

Ultimately, Ohio is expected to appropriate the \$8 billion-plus in federal relief funds through different mechanisms, including legislation such as the biennium budget (HB 1) and through Controlling Board approval.

Several states plan to create new commissions or other ad-hoc groups to oversee spending of the so-called American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money.

For example, Kansas created an ARRA Advisory group to oversee implementation of the program money, NCSL reported. The governor of Delaware has created an "accountability group" to track the funds and provide transparency, and the California Assembly has initiated a Stimulus, Economic Recovery and Jobs Task Force.

As in Ohio, the administrations and legislatures in the various states appear to have different views on how to oversee and spend the billions in federal aid.

While the Massachusetts legislature, for example, has created the Joint Committee on Federal Stimulus Oversight and the Missouri Senate has formed a select oversight committee, the Minnesota governor has taken the initiative in directing the Management and Budget Office to serve as stimulus coordinator for the state.

Montana Senate President Bob Story introduced a bill to create a commission of legislators, congressional staff and private citizens to oversee how the federal stimulus money will be spent by state government, NCSL reported.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF MARCH 16

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

Senate State & Local Government & Veterans Affairs, (Chr. Hughes, 466-5981), South Hearing Rm., 10 a.m.--Canceled
SB 7 FRAUD REPORTING (Wagoner) To require the Auditor of State to establish a fraud-reporting system for residents and public employees to file anonymous complaints of fraud and misuse of public funds by public offices or officials. (3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote)

Senate Highways & Transportation, (Chr. Patton, 466-8056), Finance Hearing Rm., 2:30 p.m.

HB 2 TRANSPORTATION BUDGET (Ujvagi) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009, and ending June 30, 2011, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. (3rd Hearing-Public testimony-Possible amendments, substitute & vote)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (Chr. Gibbs, 466-7505), North Hearing Rm., 9 a.m.

SB 26 NON-RESIDENT TAXPAYERS (Schaffer) To require municipal corporations with more than \$100 million in annual income tax collections to provide a tax credit to nonresident taxpayers. (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

House Insurance, (Chr. Dodd, 466-2500), Rm. 017, 9:30 a.m.

HB 15 BWC BUDGET (Sykes) To create the Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission Fund; to make other changes to the Workers' Compensation Law; to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009, and ending June 30, 2011; and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs. (4th Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote)

Senate Highways & Transportation, (Chr. Patton, 466-8056), Finance Finance Hearing Rm., 10 a.m.
--Meeting scheduled on if-needed basis

HB 2 TRANSPORTATION BUDGET (Ujvagi) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009, and ending June 30, 2011, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. (4th Hearing-Possible amendments, substitute & vote)

House Economic Development, (Chr. Williams, S., 466-1414), Rm. 121, 3 p.m.

HR 20 CITIES TASK FORCE (Patten) To create the Compact With Ohio Cities Task Force to help cities compete for residents and jobs, and to stimulate economic growth. (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

House Finance & Appropriations, (Chr. Sykes, 466-3100), Rm. 313, 1 p.m.

HB 15 BWC BUDGET (Sykes) To create the Deputy Inspector General for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and Industrial Commission Fund; to make other changes to the Workers' Compensation Law; to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009, and ending June 30, 2011; and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs. (All testimony-Possible amendments & vote)

HB 16 INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET (Sykes) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2009, and ending June 30, 2011, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of Commission programs. (All testimony-Possible amendments & vote)