



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

An up-to-date summary of actions of the Louisiana Legislature affecting the state's villages, towns, and cities – compiled by the Legislative Team of the Louisiana Municipal Association
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2015 REGULAR SESSION

REPORT No. 4

May 4-8, 2015

HOUSE ADVANCES REVENUE BILLS

Week 4 of the 2015 Louisiana Legislature ended with the House of Representatives passing 11 bills changing the state's tax laws that will generate an estimated \$664 million dollars towards filling the state's budget deficit for the next fiscal year. The deficit is currently listed at almost \$1.6 billion, so the revenues generated by the House still leave the legislators about \$273 million short of yesterday's goal of raising over \$900 million in tax revenue to go towards the deficit. According to news reports, house leaders have indicated they would direct the new money generated towards funding the state higher education institutions, which could lead to possible cuts in the public health care system. The House Appropriations committee will not meet to form the state's budget for next year to be considered by the full house in the next week.

Among the measures adopted included HB 805 which pares down the state refund to businesses for paying the inventory tax to local governments by 25%. Other bills includes raising the cigarette tax by 32 cents per pack, capping the state's film tax credit program at \$200 million, eliminating the tax credit for financing to lease solar energy systems and ending the full tax break for horizontal drilling of oil and gas wells once oil prices rise above \$70 per barrel.

LMA ISSUES IN WEEK 4

HB 33 by Representative Berthelot passed the yesterday full house by a vote of 90-2. This LMA-supported bill seeks to increase the fines for littering and uses the increase to help fund the UAL for the law enforcement retirement systems, including the Municipal Police Employees Retirement System. Another Berthelot sponsored bill on behalf of the LMA easily passed the house floor Tuesday by a vote of 90-0. **HB 463** clarifies the Lawrason Act with respect to when the appointment of municipal officials (Clerk, attorney, etc) takes place. Both of these bills will now be scheduled for hearings in the appropriate senate committees. In the Senate, **SB 13 by Senator Peacock** passed the Senate May 5 by a vote of 20-13. SB 13 creates Provides benefits for members of the Firefighters Retirement System hired on or after January 1, 2016.

In Committee action this week, **SB 194 by Senator Troy Brown** was turned into a study by the Senate Transportation Committee. This LMA-Supported bill sought to require railroads to use two-men crews on all freight trains operating within the State of Louisiana. The LMA expressed concerns on the potential safety issues to municipalities

if freight trains would be allowed to operate inside municipal limits with less than two crew members on board. Mayor Lawrence Henagen of Dequincy and LMA Executive Director Ronnie Harris provided testimony in support of SB 194. The LMA has committed to be actively involved in future discussions on this issue.

Another LMA supported bill, **HB 577 by Representative Katrina Jackson** has been scheduled for a hearing before the House Municipal and Parochial Affairs Committee on Thursday, May 14 upon the adjournment of the House of Representatives. HB 577 amends current annexation laws to clarify that when an annexation occurs on property owned by a public body, such as the annexation of a right of way owned by the state or parish, that only the public body has standing to challenge the annexation.

Read and research legislative instruments online

You can read and print out the text of all legislative acts and legislation online at the Louisiana Legislature's website, www.legis.state.la.us. Please contact any member of the LMA legislative team for assistance or if you have questions about any relevant legislation.

Do your part to influence the legislative process!

Contact Your Legislators! Senators – (225) 342-2040, Representatives – (225) 342-6945. You can email them and get legislative information via Legislature's web site, www.legis.state.la.us or call them at their district office. The Legislature's web portal has email addresses and district office information for each legislator.

Legislative Information: Go to LMA's website, www.lma.org, or the Legislature's web portal, www.legis.state.la.us.

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