

2017

Indiana General Assembly Report

Week Seven

With only one more week of committee meetings remaining, calendars filled quickly this week while Committee Chairs worked to clear their schedules of bills. CAC attended meetings of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, the House Elections Committee, the House Utilities Committee and the Senate Utilities Committee. In addition, we monitored other committees and marked the progression of legislation we're watching on floors of the House and Senate.

We'd gotten false alarms for weeks regarding a hearing for [House Bill 1014](#) but we started Week Seven without official notice of a hearing in the House Elections Committee. So we joined *Common Cause Indiana* in a call to action regarding Indiana's only hope for an independent redistricting process. By Tuesday afternoon, our voices were heard and hundreds of Hoosiers prepared to rally at the Statehouse and attend the hearing the next day.

Despite overwhelming testimony in favor of the bill—despite a packed House Chamber and one of the largest audiences yet this session—Chairman Milo Smith (R-Columbus) announced he would not allow a vote. Outcry ensued. With the time for committee hearings dwindling, the bill is likely dead. Read more about it [here](#).

In the House Utilities Committee, [House Bill 1519](#) was voted out of committee unanimously. The bill is designed to include wastewater as an eligible service to be included in infrastructure zones for the purposes of economic development as well as to extend service to unserved or underserved populations. The bill also allows water utilities to recover costs from ratepayers for the development and purchase of future water supplies. Additionally, the bill seeks a summer study committee around the issue of lead service lines in Indiana.

[House Bill 1494](#) was heard yet again in the House Environmental Committee, this time passing with a vote of 7-3. Though amended to address concerns regarding permitting, the bill remains a bad policy statement, loosening even further regulations on large factory farms, commonly called Confined Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs. HB 1494 would eliminate some public notice requirements and yet removes safeguards such as IDEM permitting for construction of new CAFOs.

Good news came in the form of a second reading amendment to [House Bill 1495](#), which reappeared on the House Calendar Tuesday. HB1495 has been coined the IDEM "technical corrections and clean up bill" but contained a poison pill provision allowing ArcelorMittal to sidestep permitting process for an industrial waste site. Rep. Earl Harris (D-East Chicago) removed the waste site language with unanimous approval from the House.

In addition, the House passed [House Bill 1344](#) unanimously this week. HB1344 will ease the bureaucratic requirements in dealing with the East Chicago lead crisis.

The first House Bill to be passed by the Senate, [House Enrolled Act 1230](#), was signed by Governor Holcomb Tuesday. HEA1230 aims to assist Indiana's electric utilities in complying with the updated federal policy regarding coal ash. Also in the Senate, [Senate Bill 500](#), a bill that would prevent homeowners' associations from thwarting homeowners' efforts to install solar panels on their homes was passed by a [vote of 31-17](#).

In Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee we saw a harmful piece of legislation die a swift death. [Senate Bill 245](#) would shamelessly expand payday loan products to include a 24-month loan of up to \$2,500 with an APR of 240%.

At the same time SB245 failed in committee, [Senate Bill 309](#) passed the Senate Utilities Committee by a vote of 8-2. Despite being amended by Senators Brandt Hershman and Mike Delph, the bill still fails the test of academic integrity, much less Indiana's commitment to furthering renewable energy as indicated by statute. Indiana's net metering rule, which has enabled hundreds of Hoosier small businesses, farms, households, places of worship, and schools to install renewable energy systems on their property saves each organization tens of thousands of dollars by generating their own energy. Limiting access to those savings is simply bad public policy.

Upcoming This Week

- [Senate Bill 277](#) will be up for a vote as soon as Monday. Sen. Randy Head continues his work towards a healthy food pilot program for Indiana
- Senate Bill 309 will be heard on second reading, meaning it's eligible for amendment, as early as Tuesday.
- Transit Day is February 21st. Learn more [here](#)
- House Bill 1494 will be heard on second reading, meaning it's eligible for amendment, as early as Monday

To follow these bills in real time, make sure you follow us on [Twitter](#). We tweet throughout the week as to the progress of bills we mention in our reports and on our Indiana General Assembly Bill Watch [website](#).

A Scheduling Note

Senate and House leadership announced this week that *Sine Die*, the last day of the legislature, will be moved up by a week to April 21st due to lack of hotel room availability.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lindsay Shipps & Kerwin Olson