



FOURTH WEEK OF THE LEGISLATURE

This week as chock full of contentious committee meetings, with many discussing and/or acting on legislative language—some of which hadn't been shared with committee members much less the press, stakeholders or the public. Now this is normal for the statehouse but when we're in the middle of a pandemic and meeting attendance is scant at best, this "policy" of not disclosing amendment language publicly before action is taken is exactly why the [Indiana State Legislature has received poor transparency grades in the past](#).

That's exactly what happened during Monday's hearing of [SB 389](#) (which deregulates Indiana's wetlands) by the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee and Tuesday's hearing of [HB 1191](#) by the House Utilities, Energy and Telecommunications Committee.

In the Senate, amendment language offered for SB389 wasn't shared with all committee members, but the amendment and the bill [ultimately passed on a party line vote](#). We submitted testimony to Chairman Messmer and the rest of the Committee members shortly before committee asking for a no vote. On Thursday, the bill moved to the Senate floor for further action and both Republicans and Democrats supported a move by Sen. Karen Tallian (D-LaPorte) to reduce the bill to a study committee. [That move failed by a vote of 19-29](#) and the bill could be up for the Senate's vote as soon as Monday. In the meantime, take a look at Hoosier Environmental Council's [SB 389 Myth-buster](#) Guide.

LEGISLATION WE'RE FOLLOWING

Meanwhile in the House, a mysterious amendment which the Chair of the committee stated he had only seen a "half-hour ago," was offered and adopted. The amendment greatly expanded the scope of the bill by targeting State Universities and their decisions related to energy efficient and sustainable building construction and design. Despite our strong opposition to [HB 1191](#) that was outlined in committee and in a follow-up story in [Energy News](#), the [committee passed the bill](#) that "[infringes] on local rights and an attempt to preemptively protect natural gas utilities, even though there have been no moves to limit natural gas in Indiana." The bill is now eligible for further action in the House and sits on the [second reading calendar](#).

We also spoke to other bills heard in the House Utilities Committee this week including [HB 1220](#), which extends the 21st Century Energy Task Force for 2 years and changes the makeup of the committee members. We supported extending the task force but noted the bill removed a consumer advocate from the Task Force makeup. The bill was amended and [passed along party lines](#).

Also heard was [HB1287](#) which addresses expanding wastewater service to unserved and underserved areas by investor-owned wastewater utilities. We are supportive of policies which attempt to ensure that all Hoosiers have access to essential services, but we were neutral on the bill as there was an unexpected amendment adopted by the committee which was unrelated to the intent of the bill. In our testimony, we did point out that bills such as these do raise utility bills in the short term under the guise of bills eventually coming down in the long term. Our testimony was summarized in an [article](#) by Indiana Public Media. [The bill passed by a vote of 13-0](#).

OUR TEAM AT THE STATEHOUSE:

KERWIN
OLSONLINDSAY
HAAKE

ITEMS UPCOMING THIS WEEK

This week we are anticipating a close vote on SB389 in the Senate as early as Monday. HB1191 may be voted on as early as Tuesday in the House. On Monday morning in Senate Committee, [SB 373](#), a Carbon Credit bill will be heard. We plan on testifying on a few bills in the House and Senate Utilities this week including [SB 386](#), a cost securitization bill, and [HB 1520](#), a bill loosely aimed at the large topic of reliability, so make sure to [follow us on Twitter as we routinely live tweet](#).

SAVE THE DATE

for **Renewable Energy Day**, February 5th! It's virtual this year and you should go! Click [here](#) for more.

