Several Bills Make Progress as Deadlines Draw Near

The deadline for both House and Senate committee reports is January 28. All bills not passed through committee in their first chamber at that point will die, putting pressure on legislators to hear bills next week. Several bills relevant to the Agri-business Council of Indiana made progress during this week of heavy legislative action. Movement of the road funding bill, beef marking development, and environmental rules and standards, as well as the state’s action on the outbreak of the avian influenza will be covered in this update.

HB 1001, Road Funding Bill Testimony in Committee, Headed to Ways and Means

HB 1001, Road Funding, has been sent to Ways and Means. The bill allocates money from excess reserves, state matching bridge and road fund, state highway fund, a tax collected on gasoline sales and a tax collected on cigarettes to fund infrastructure improvements. The bill allows the tolling of I– 65, I– 69, I– 80/94. The bill has been met with support from the Indiana Farm Bureau as well as Indiana Manufacturing Association and American Cancer Society.

Environmental Rules and Standards Bill—HB 1082

The bill concerning environmental rules and standards, which impacts IC 13-13-8-15 and IC 13-22-2-4, was referred to the House Environmental Affairs Committee last week. HB 1082 prohibits the environmental rules board from adopting a rule or standard that is more stringent than a current rule or standard. It was heard on Wednesday, January 20, and has yet to be voted on. ACI has a great interest in this bill being passed and we are optimistic that there will be no roadblocks.

Beef Market Development Bill—HB 1224

HB 1224, beef market development, had its reading before the House Ways and Means Committee on January 20. This bill requires that a state assessment of $1 per head of cattle must be collected on the sale of cattle in Indiana. The Indiana beef council is expected to perform these duties and cattle producers may be refunded for the assessment. This bill passed out of Ways and Means, 20-0, and will head back to the House for its third reading.

State’s Action on the Avian Influenza Outbreak

Due to a bird flu outbreak in southwest Indiana, crews have almost finished killing 400,000 birds at the 10 affected commercial poultry farms. The Indiana State Board of Animal health says that 13,000 turkeys were killed Wednesday but the virus has not been found in any other flocks since Saturday. This strain is different from the strain found last summer that killed 48 million birds.

General Assembly Deadlines and Updates

The Indiana General Assembly has completed its third week of session. There is only one more week of committee readings in the bill’s chamber of origin. Then all bills passed by chamber of origin will switch into the opposing chamber for deliberation.