

THE TICKER

A Weekly Public Affairs Update for the PFPA Membership

PRODUCED BY:
PENNSYLVANIA FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
"YOUR CAPITOL INSIDER"



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Reported by: Paul Lyskava, PFPA Executive Director

GOP-lead General Assembly to Finish State Budget by June 30

The GOP-lead majorities in the State House and Senate are moving to send the Governor a budget by Tuesday. The House passed the bill on Saturday and the bill is currently going through the process in the state Senate.

Governor Wolf has stated that he will veto part or the entire budget once it gets to his desk.

The budget to be approved includes funding for the Department of Agriculture's Hardwoods Development Council, which was not part of the Governor's budget. It does not currently include sales and use tax relief for the purchase of logging equipment.

The budget increases the General Fund budget to \$30.18 billion, an increase of about \$1 billion. There are no increased taxes as part of the plan. The plan includes an additional \$100 million to K-12 basic ed, with additional increases in Special Ed, Pre-K Counts, the creation of an Accelerated School Construction Investment Program to free up local district funding and provided full annual funding of school employee retirement contributions. The budget also includes \$41 million for higher education.

The General Assembly is working on a liquor privatization plan and a pension reform plan to send to the Governor this week.

The budget to be sent to the Governor does not include the Governor's proposed changes to revenue, including a new gas Severance Tax; increase in the Personal Income Tax; and increase and expansion of the sales and usage taxes; a new bank tax and additional tobacco taxes.

After the anticipated veto of the budget later this week, the state will continue to operate after July 1. Current DCNR timber sales operations will not be impacted.

After any veto, the General Assembly and Governor will have to continue to work on an agreeable budget.

PFPA Signs onto Additional Comment Letter on Northern Long Eared Bat Rules

PFPA has signed onto a letter from industry addressing the recent determination of the NLEB as a threatened species and the 4(d) rule. The comments emphasize that there is no research requiring restrictions within 0.25 miles of hibernacula and roost sites. The comments also stress the need to ensure consistent application of the 4(d) rules by FWS offices and state agencies.

PFPA Signs onto Letter Supporting Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2015

PFPA has signed onto a letter endorsing the Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2015, which would improve forest management activities on federal lands. The bill is expected to be considered in by the full U.S. House soon after the July 4th holiday. The bill will provide the Forest Service with additional authority to provide incentives and collaboration to work with private sector on management activities; allowing states to fund projects; allow for additional categorical exclusions on commonsense efforts which will allow the reduction of red tape and redundant environmental evaluations. PFPA members can make their own Congressional contacts on this bill by visiting: www.healthyforests.org/action_center?vvsrc=%2fcampaigns%2f41317%2frespond

PFPA Update

Former PennDOT Secretary Barry Schoch is returning to the private sector to become an adviser at engineering firm McCormick Taylor. Schoch was Secretary under Corbett, but had stayed over as advisor to Governor Wolf. . . . Josh First, owner of Appalachian Land & Conservation Services Co. and a PFPA member, has announced that he will be running for the 15th State Senate District in 2016 against incumbent Rob Teplitz (D-Dauphin). First ran for the seat in 2012, but lost in the primary. . . .

PFPA News

- 🌲 The PFPA Offices will be closed on Friday, July 3 to celebrate the Fourth of July.
- 🌲 Welcome to the following new members to PFPA:
Integrated Industrial Technologies, Inc. Pittsburgh
Kinsley Construction, Inc. York
McD Farms LLC State College
Brian McMahan Petersburg
Northern Timberlands Tunkhannock
Postlewait Logging Company Port Allegany
Stiles Machinery Grand Rapids, MI

"DYK" – Did You Know? — In 36 states, including PA, drug overdose has become the leading cause of injury, surpassing motor vehicle-related deaths. PA ranked 23rd highest for the number of injury-related deaths in the state, at a rate of 64.3 per 100,000 people, compared to national average of 58.4 per 100,000. – *Trust for America's Health*