

## **MPMCSA-LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**

### **January 26, 2013**

Week three of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislature saw the Senate Republicans continue to play out their turf battles and widen the divide that has become more of a large “ravine”.... Regardless of what the two factions are relaying to the press at this point, there is no meeting of the minds or joining of the hands. Lobbyists such as me are now wondering about bill sponsors in the Senate and whether our issues will get caught up in the ball juggling between the two factions. Simply put the whole thing is crazy.

#### **IMPORTANT DATE**

Please put this date on your calendar – March 12<sup>th</sup>, Helena Legislative Session

The Association will again host a legislative reception in Helena at the Montana City Grill – 5:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m. In the past the event has been well attended by legislators so it’s important that we have as many members there as possible. A block of rooms will be reserved at the Colonial Hotel for those who wish to spend the evening. We will also plan for a trip up to the Capitol either the day of or morning after or...both. Stay tuned for more details.

#### **HOUSE BILL 316**

House Bill 316 introduced by Representative Nancy Wilson-Missoula would increase the gasoline tax from 27 cents per gallon to 29 cents per gallon. The first 1 cent p.g. collected would go the highway maintenance; the second 1 cent p.g. would go to public transportation and DUI task enforcement. The MPMCSA board will determine the Association’s position and report to the membership.

#### **SENATE BILL 116**

Senate Bill 116 by Senator Ron Arthun-Wilsaw, repeals the controversial legislation passed by the MT Contractors Association in 2009 that requires small contractors to secure a temporary special fuel permit and file a \$500 bond. The legislation in fact, repeals the temporary permits in total unless the vehicle (over 26,000 lbs. gvw) is not covered under the International Fuel Tax Agreement. The bill has passed the Senate and will be transmitted to the House. The Association is monitoring the bill.

In general there are a few good business bills being proposed that are now moving through the process:

**SENATE BILL 27:** By Senator Cliff Larsen-Missoula. Would expand the definition of “small employer” for the insurance pool and tax credit program known as “Insure Montana” from a limit of nine total employees to 25 employees. The bill had its first hearing yesterday in the Senate Public Health Committee. A bigger concern on the Insure Montana program is seeing funding for the overall program restored as currently it is not in Governor Bullock’s budget.

**SENATE BILL 96:** By Senator Bruce Tudvedt-Kalispell. Would lower the business equipment tax by raising the lower limit taxed at 1.5% from \$2 million of assessed property to \$10 million; over \$10 million in assessment would be taxed at 3%. The bill had its first hearing last Wednesday in the Senate Taxation Committee; there were no opponents to the bill.

**SENATE BILL 139:** By Senator Ed Walker-Billings. Patterned after the federal Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) and laws in 42 other states, SB139 would require agencies to look at how a proposed rule or regulation would adversely or positively impact small businesses. The bill defines a small business as 50 or fewer employees. The bill had its first hearing last Wednesday in the Senate Business Committee and received broad support.

**HOUSE BILL 158:** By Representative Doug Kary-Billings. Requires state agencies to appear in person before the appropriate administrative rule committee prior to adopting, amending, or repealing any rules except emergency or temporary rules. This bill also had its first hearing last Wednesday in the House Business Committee and also enjoyed broad support.

If the membership hears or sees a bill that is of interest and would like more information please contact me at the Email address listed below.

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