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| **GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.**  17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245  COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413  PHONE: 614-461-9335  FAX: 614-461-9336  **Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts**  Legislative Activities Report  **March 2019** |

After much anticipation, the House and Senate have finalized their committee assignments for the 133rd General Assembly. While all committee chairmen wield considerable power over legislation, with the state operating budget just weeks away from being introduced, none will have more power than the finance committee chairs in the House and Senate. In the Senate, Senator Matt Dolan will chair the Finance Committee and on the House side, longtime legislator Scott Oelslager will lead the House Finance Committee. The main operating budget must be introduced by March 15th and passed and signed by the governor by June 30th.

Governor DeWine provided some insight into the development of the state operating budget, stating that it will include provisions focused on improving water quality, which will include additional funding. The DeWine Administration has committed to taking an more inclusive approach to addressing the harmful algal bloom problem in Lake Erie – a different approach than former Governor Kasich, who tried to increase regulations last year on farmers in Lake Erie watersheds.

Rep. Jamie Callender will chair the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR)—a committee he previously chaired as a member of the House of Representatives over a decade ago. At the end of the 132nd General Assembly, lawmakers frustrated with informal rule making under the Kasich Administration overrode a veto on a bill expanding JCARR authority. The law enables JCARR to seek more information about fees and related costs, and the ability to recommend invalidation of an existing rule if it has unintended or unexpected impacts on businesses. The rule also empowers the committee to call agencies before the panel to testify if the agency is found to have engaged in informal rule making that caused an adverse impact. Representative Callender will also chair the House Public Utilities Committee.

The first round of bills were introduced in both chambers which included 50 Senate bills and over 60 House bills. Typically, the first round of bills indicates the direction the respective chamber wants to head in for the duration of the General Assembly. This was clear with Senate bills aimed at regulatory reduction, occupational licensing reform and drug price transparency, just to name a few. The legislative priorities of the House will become clear once the text of the first fifteen bills is released to the public.

The State Transportation Budget (HB 62) was introduced and immediately began receiving hearings in the House Finance Committee. To address decaying roads, bridges and other infrastructure, the proposed transportation budget includes a recommended gas-tax of $0.18 per gallon. The recommendation came after the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Transportation Infrastructure issued its report after hearing testimony from stakeholders and interested parties prior to the introduction of the bill. The $0.18 figure has been a point of contention among lawmaker and whether it holds at $0.18 remains to be seen. There have been discussions about reducing the number or, as Senate President Larry Obhof suggested, perhaps offsetting the gas-tax with an income tax-cut.

Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking during the 133rd Ohio General Assembly:

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| **HB27** | **PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY** (INGRAM C) To modify political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2019 - House Civil Justice, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB46** | **STATE GOVT EXPENDITURE DATABASE** (GREENSPAN D) To require the Treasurer of State to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/27/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB62** | **TRANSPORTATION BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/28/2019 - House Finance, (Seventh Hearing) |
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| **HB78** | **PREVAILING WAGE-PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS** (RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER S) To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/20/2019 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor |
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| **HB79** | **INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of Commission programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/5/2019 - House Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB80** | **BWC BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the bureau's programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2019 - House Insurance, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB84** | **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS-SEWER LATERALS** (HOLMES G) To expressly include, as eligible projects under the State Capital Improvements Program, water and sewer laterals located on private property. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2019 - Introduced |
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| **HB95** | **BRINE-CONVERSION OF WELLS** (SKINDELL M) To alter the Oil and Gas Law with respect to brine and the conversion of wells. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/21/2019 - Introduced |
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| **SB1** | **REDUCE REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions and to continue the provision of this act on and after August 18, 2019. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/5/2019 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Third Hearing) |
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| **SB2** | **STATEWIDE WATERSHED PLANNING** (PETERSON B, DOLAN M) To create a statewide watershed planning structure for watershed programs to be implemented by local soil and water conservation districts. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/20/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources |
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| **SB8** | **TAX CREDITS-OHIO OPPORTUNITY ZONE** (SCHURING K) To authorize tax credits for investments in an Ohio Opportunity Zone. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/5/2019 - Senate Ways and Means, (Third Hearing) |
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| **SB10** | **THEFT IN OFFICE PENALTIES** (WILSON S) To expand the penalties for theft in office based on the amount stolen and to include as restitution audit costs of the entity that suffered the loss. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/5/2019 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB33** | **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES OFFENSES** (HOAGLAND F) To modify certain criminal offenses with respect to critical infrastructure facilities and to impose fines and civil liability for damage to a critical infrastructure facility. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/20/2019 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB38** | **WATER AND SEWER FUNDS-MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS** (SCHURING K) To revise the law governing municipal corporation use of water and sewer funds. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2019 - Introduced |
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| **SB50** | **INCREASE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL FEE** (EKLUND J) To increase state solid waste disposal fee that is deposited into the Soil and Water Conservation District Assistance Fund, and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/20/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |