



Week 7 - February 21, 2020

THE VERMONT STATEHOUSE INSIDER

Weekly politics & analysis
of the issues in Montpelier



SIN CITY

As the work day drew to a close late on Tuesday afternoon the members of the House Judiciary Committee filed into the House chamber to take testimony from supporters and opponents on H.610. The bill would require alleged domestic abusers who have been served with a restraining order to relinquish their firearms. At the same time people from all over Vermont poured into the statehouse to weigh in at the public hearing. Additional security staff began segregating the opposing sides into two lines up the spiral stairways to the chamber. Once the hearing was underway the committee members remained composed, though at times they looked visibly moved while listening to hours of often tense and emotional testimony. Organizations working to combat domestic

violence and survivors of domestic abuse testified in support of the legislation. Many of them said the bill, if enacted, would offer security and solace to a victim who feels scared for their safety and their life. The committee will continue working on the bill next week.

Another newsworthy item that occurred this week was the House floor debate on H.688, the “Global Warming Solutions Act.” The bill sets up a “Climate Action Panel” charged with developing a plan for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (26 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050) and tasks the Agency of Natural Resources with adopting rules to implement the plan. Significantly, the bill would allow lawsuits against the state if efforts to cut emissions fall short. After a lengthy floor debate on Thursday the bill received initial approval on a 105-37 roll call vote and final approval on Friday on a voice vote.

Representative Matt Trieber, D-Rockingham, announced he would resign his seat last week and served his final day in the legislature on Thursday this week. Trieber said he felt the need to resign because he would have to take a leave of absence from his job as a counselor for high school students with disabilities in order to continue to serve. Trieber was appointed by Governor Peter Shumlin in 2011 and re-elected four times after being appointed.

DIRECT MOTOR VEHICLE SALES

The Senate Transportation Committee took up S.241, An Act Relating to Motor Vehicle Manufacturers that Sell Directly to Consumers, on Tuesday. The committee reviewed an updated draft bill from Sen. Andrew Perchlik, D-Washington, that authorizes manufacturers that sell direct to consumers to be licensed as dealers in Vermont except they would be exempt from the requirements that they own or lease real estate to be used primarily as a dealership and that they must be open for business at least 146 days per year. The bill also authorizes manufacturers that sell direct to consumers to open a service and warranty center in Vermont. Finally, DMV proposed that the direct

manufacturer to consumer sales issue be studied along with other online motor vehicle sales websites such as Carvana, Vroom and TrueCar with a report back next year. Sen. Perchlik agrees with the study and a report back next year but at a minimum wants to authorize Tesla to open a service and warranty service center in Vermont this year. The committee will be taking the bill up again on Wednesday, 2/26.

[Here is the latest draft of the bill.](#)

REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN TRANSPORTATION

The Senate Finance Committee took testimony this week regarding [S.337](#), An Act Relating to Energy Efficiency Entities and Programs to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Thermal Energy and Transportation Sectors. The bill authorizes the use of up to \$2 million per year from existing electric efficiency funds for up to three years to be spent on programs, measures and services that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the thermal energy or transportation sectors. The programs are not identified but there has been discussion that some of the funds could be used for education and training of dealership salespeople or the general public about electric vehicles.

TRANSPORTATION BILL

The House Transportation Committee continued to take testimony this week on the Transportation Bill, which contains the FY21 Transportation Budget and miscellaneous transportation related provisions.

DMV MISCELLANEOUS BILL

The DMV Miscellaneous Bill, S.339, was introduced and referred to the Senate Finance Committee this week. The 65-page bill contains various changes that DMV wants to make to the law ranging from a study of the release of DMV public records to the length of trucks allowed on certain roads. [Here is a link](#) to the bill as the Senate Transportation Committee approved it.