

## North Carolina Legislative Update, March 22, 2019

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Budget appropriations meetings continued this week at the General Assembly as a number of substantive bills were introduced on a variety of topics.

### **Farm Act of 2019 (S315)**

The annual bill to make various changes in State agricultural laws was introduced in the Senate. Over half of the bill language addresses hemp production and regulation. The bill would create a North Carolina Hemp Commission to oversee hemp production and trade in the state.

Here's a link to an analysis of the bill by Brooks Pierce lawyer Clint Pinyan—

<http://www.brookspierce.com/news-insights/bill-introduced-general-assembly-create-nc-hemp-commission-and-promote-private-hemp>

### **School Bond Bill (H381)**

A new bill to spur school construction was introduced in the House this week. Unlike the previous filed school construction bill (H241) that has already passed the House and would use bonds as a funding mechanism, the new bill would use the State Capital and Infrastructure Fund, which is funded through the appropriation process. This new bill's approach is similar to that proposed by Senate leaders. Governor Roy Cooper has indicated support for using bonds for this construction.

### **Broadband Bills**

A number of bills were introduced this week to spur Internet broadband buildout. They follow Governor Cooper's recommendation of additional funding (\$30 million) to go into the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Fund ("GREAT"), which began in 2018 and incentivizes local governments and internet companies to partner on this issue.

[H398](#) would alter the GREAT program in various ways including providing \$15M of annual funding. [H387/S310](#) would lift certain restrictions on broadband construction by electric membership corporations and [H431](#) would do the same related to construction by local governments.

For more information, contact the Brooks Pierce Government Affairs Team, linked below.