

North Carolina Legislative Update, May 9, 2019

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Legislators considered dozens of bills this week in advance of the bill crossover deadline. Both chambers are taking a short break before the Senate gears up to release and pass their version of the budget by the end of the month.

Crossover

Legislators this week worked long hours in advance of the May 9 crossover deadline. By that date, bills that do not contain a finance or appropriation provision have to pass their original chamber and crossover to the other chamber to remain eligible for consideration. Although rules permit changing bill language by inserting unrelated legislation into eligible bills later in the session, the crossover deadline is a notable event in any session since it narrows the topics that are likely to be considered during the session. This session both chambers wrapped up most of their work days before this deadline.

“Hands Free” Driving (H144)

With a 92 to 23 vote, the House passed a bill this week which would make it unlawful to drive a vehicle while using your hands to engage in “distracted behavior” that impairs or restricts the vehicle’s proper operation and that results in operation that is careless or reckless. The bill covers the use of a handheld mobile telephones and electronic devices in the definition of “distracted behavior.” The proposed penalty for a violation is a \$100 fine plus court costs with no driver’s license or insurance points imposed.

Oral Cancer Treatments (H480)

A bill to require insurers to cover oral chemotherapy drugs in the same manner as intravenous or injected chemotherapy passed the House this week with a 97-18 vote. In the past, similar bills have passed the House, but were not been taken up by the Senate.

Single-use Plastic Waste (H823)

This week the House approved by an overwhelming majority, a bill concerning single-use plastics. The bill would divert five percent of the revenue generated by the solid waste disposal tax to local governments to provide plastic recycling services. The bill would also require state agencies and educational institutions to report annually on their purchase of recycled materials, would direct the Environmental Review Commission to study the issue of single-use plastics, and would require the Legislative Services Officer to "evaluate and implement opportunities to reduce" single-use plastics in the General Assembly's food establishments.

"Second Chance" Act (S562)

The Senate unanimously passed a bill Wednesday that would make the expunction process easier for a number of crimes committed by minors. The bill's supporters, which include some businesses and conservative groups, argue that expunging the covered crimes will help people get jobs later in life. Under the bill's provisions, the expungement petition could not be filed until the person's sentence is complete and restitution paid. Certain crimes, such as those requiring sex offense registration, would not be eligible under the bill.

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