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## *From My Seat On Jones Street...*

### Greetings:

June 21, 2016

The Senate has been in full swing over the last several days. Committee activity is ramping up and a flurry of bills are coming to a vote, ranging from education to environmental standards. The budget conference committee continues its work on HB 1030: 2016 Appropriations Act. The committee consists of appointees from both chambers of the General Assembly by the Speaker of the House and the President Pro-Tem of the Senate.

I have received numerous calls and email messages regarding several special provisions included in the Senate's version of the bill. Many of you share my concerns for the lack of pay raises for state employees and retirees, as well as the change in definition of year-round schools that would make 88 schools alter their calendars. The bill also contains a provision that would roll back critical water quality protections and would delay implementation of the Jordan Lake Rules.

We anticipate the Conference Committee report on HB 1030 very soon. The Conference report will then be voted on in each chamber before it moves to the Governor for his signature. The vote is a confirmation that the conferees are in agreement and it cannot be altered on the floor.

The following are important bills reviewed and passed by the Senate in recent days:

#### **HB 657: Math Standards**

This bill requires that local school administrative units must provide students and parents the option of a traditional sequence of mathematics courses beginning in 2017-18. The State Board of Education cannot allow students to use a Career and Technical course to fulfill a mathematics graduation requirement, except for certain students with individualized education programs.

Additionally, the Department of Public Instruction is required to study and make recommendations to local boards of education on the appropriate student-teacher ratio in implementation of integrated and the traditional 4 sequences for high school mathematics courses.

It is my opinion that if the General Assembly is going to legislate curriculum changes, then adequate funding for textbooks, professional development and additional instructors should be provided. As it stands, the bill creates an unfunded mandate for our schools.

The majority of Democrats in the Senate could not support the currently unfunded mandates set forth in the bill.

#### **HB169: Regulatory Reform**

HB 169 calls for additional oversight in state and local agency spending and operational practices, in addition to cutting back environmental standards in energy efficiency and recycling programs.

Within this omnibus bill are several weighted issues – and each issue warrants separate discussion and separate consideration, which was not provided in this bill.

*Agriculture/Environment/  
Natural Resources*  
*Appropriations: Base Budget*  
*Appropriations: Justice &  
Public Safety*  
*Commerce*  
*Education/Higher Education*  
*Government*  
*Judiciary I*  
*State & Local Government*

**Spotlight**

The NC Housing Finance Agency has awarded \$200,000 to area homeowners for emergency repairs, and 15 of the 29 families are in Chatham and Orange Counties! The grants will enable veterans, elderly, and disabled citizens who have very low incomes to continue living safely in their homes.

The bill creates excess red tape in a process that is already fraught with rules and regulations, and the debate for this bill essentially skipped the process of conferring with the industries that the regulations will directly impact. Rules should not be made in a vacuum, they should be made with consideration of the impact they will have on their respective industries.

The electronics recycling program was repealed with this bill. This program is not only beneficial to the environment by avoiding long-term contamination, it also is a job-creating program. Approximately 400 jobs are estimated to be lost with the repeal. It is negligent to repeal this program without thinking of the long-term repercussions.

Senate Democrats offered amendments to protect current electronic recycling programs, but they were blocked by Republicans. The bill passed along party lines.

**HB 763: Task on Regulatory Reform**

HB 763 would block wind turbines around military bases as a means of protecting surrounding airspace.

The bill, however, also puts in jeopardy more than \$700 million in wind energy contracts across the state.

It is vitally important to protect our military installations. But, as we protect our bases, we must also look at ways to protect renewable energy resources. With that in mind, we want to reach a compromise that can protect both interests.

Please continue to contact my office to share your concerns on issues or if my office can be of any assistance to you. Thank you for allowing me to represent you in Raleigh.

Sincerely,

