

## **ASA-MN Legislative Update**

**March 21, 2011**

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### **It's All About The Budget**

Legislators are consumed with balancing the budget before moving on to policy bills. The last month has been devoted to setting spending targets for the state government budget to identify areas for funding and for cutting. The budget deadline is March 25. Most expect to see the policy committees to swing in to action the first week of April.

### **Companion Bills Introduced: Evidence of Construction Financing & Retainage**

Senator Rest (D – New Hope) introduced the companion bills to the ASA-MN supported bills. The bill numbers are: SF 859 (HF590) – Evidence of Construction Financing and SF 861 (HF 589). Both bills were referred to the Jobs Committee.

### **Design Professionals Seek Exception to Additional Insured Coverage**

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Minnesota (ACEC) is pursuing legislation that would alter the definition of construction contract and allow those providing professional services such as engineering and architectural design to be able to avoid additional insured contract responsibilities. The bill, HF 390 (Hoppe, R – Chaska) / SF 387 (Brown, R – Becker), is in the House and Senate Commerce Committees and no hearing have been scheduled yet.

### **Building Jobs Coalition**

ASA-MN continues to participate in the Building Jobs Coalition. This year the Coalition is pursuing a variety of initiatives to stimulate construction activity. Among the issues being discussed are banking regulation reform, environmental review streamlining, non-conforming use variance language, vacant building tax base adjustments, and TIF extensions. Specific initiatives supported by the Coalition include:

- Lifting the moratorium on nuclear power construction
- Small Business Loan Guaranty Program
- Temporary reductions in sewer and water connection fees
- Alternative energy sector investments
- Higher Education Asset Preservation Account (HEAPRA) construction projects
- Construction sector bonding bill provisions

### **Important Legislative Dates**

March 25: Finance Bill Deadline; all finance bills to Ways & Means.  
April 18-25: Spring Break  
April 29: First Policy Bill Deadline  
May 6: Second Policy Bill Deadline  
May 23: Adjournment Date For Regular Session

### **Bills of Interest**

Restricted Plumber Licenses - HF 632 / SF 411 - allows for the transfer of restricted master plumber and journeyman plumber licenses in certain circumstances.

Air Admittance Valves - HF 837 / SF 579 - removes a state provision prohibiting the plumbing code for allowing air admittance valves.

Construction Codes 180-day Effective Date - HF 1076 / SF 634 - provides a six month window after the of publication of new construction codes in the State Register before the new codes become effective.

Construction Contractor Registration - HF 1170 / SF 852 - establishes a detailed definition of construction contractors and construction services. It requires those providing construction services on or after January 1, 2012 to register with the Department of Labor and Industry.

Continuing Education & Backflow Valves - SF 899 - makes appropriations to the various agencies that regulate the construction industry as well as provides enhanced continuing education standards for licensed construction professionals. It provides regulation for the appropriate installation of backflow valves.

**PLEASE SEE THE [TRACKING REPORT](#) FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF THE BILLS BEING TRACKED THIS YEAR.**