

STATE APPEALS FEDERAL FLINT CLEAN WATER ORDER

A federal court order that gave Michigan and Flint a month to provide evidence that Flint residents have access to clean water is being appealed by the state.

The order mandated that the state and city either document that all occupied homes in Flint have installed and properly functioning filters, or ensure they are receiving four cases of bottled water per resident each week, delivered to each home.

The state is requesting an immediate stay on the injunction until the appeal can be heard by the federal appeals court in Cincinnati.

A spokesperson for Governor Rick Snyder said the reallocation of resources necessary to comply with the order would essentially cripple the other recovery efforts in the city including those aimed at ensuring filters are installed properly.

EXPANSIVE PLAN TO TACKLE LEAD EXPOSURE IS RELEASED

A broad list of recommendations to address lead exposure and poisoning has been put forth by a board created by an Executive Order from Governor Rick Snyder and led by Lt. Governor Brian Calley.

Among the recommendations are testing every home in the state for lead in the air, water and soil, along with screening every infant for the neurotoxin.

In addition, the report calls for assembling a comprehensive statewide database of lead and its environmental presence in every home, especially those built before 1978, along with other buildings.

According to Lt. Governor Calley, Michigan lags other states on some of these measures. He pointed out that Massachusetts has required testing for toxins like lead as part of the sale of any home.

A long-term goal of the board is to have a permanent commission to oversee the implementation of the recommendations, and to increase communication and develop protocols in state departments that bring local governments into the effort.

LAWMAKERS TO RETURN TO A BUSY LAME DUCK SESSION

It does not appear there will any shortage of issues to deal with when lawmakers return from the Thanksgiving break: energy reform, municipal retirement reform, and prevailing wage, to name a few.

Recently a potential \$50 million mechanical and electrical systems renovation of the Capitol Building is inching its way onto the legislative docket.

Two bills (HBs 6047 and 6048) were introduced recently and House Oversight and Ethics Committee Chair Representative Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) has asked committee members to study the two bills that would clarify the scope of the Capitol Commission and enable it to use its annual appropriation for bonding.

LEONARD ELECTED NEW HOUSE SPEAKER

The Republican Caucus has elected third-term Representative Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) Speaker of the House of Representatives.

He replaces Representative Kevin Cotter (R-Mt. Pleasant) who is term limited. Representative Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) was elected Speaker Pro Tem and Representative Dan Lauwers (R-Brockway Twp.) will be the Majority Floor Leader.

On the Democratic side, Representative Sam Singh (D-East Lansing) was chosen by the Democrat Caucus as House Minority Leader.

Other names on the table for minority leader included Representative Scott Dianda (D-Calumet), Representative Frank Liberati (D-Allen Park) and Representative Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills). Representative Christine Greig was elected Minority Floor Leader

COX TO HEAD HOUSE APPROPS

The glass ceiling was not broken in the presidential election, but is being broken here in Michigan.

Second-term Representative Laura Cox (R-Livonia), tapped by House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt), becomes the first woman to chair the powerful House Appropriations Committee. She will have a major impact on the House spending decisions in the 2017-2018 legislative term.

Representative Leonard, in naming Representative Cox said, "No one is qualified or better prepared to hold such an important position for us than Representative Laura Cox."

Representative Cox said she does not yet have a "laundry list" of priorities set for the committee, but that her main goal is to judiciously spend the taxpayers' money.

In other action, Representative Leonard named Representative Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) Chair of the Committee on Committees that will undertake the rest of the committee assignments according to Representative Leonard.

PERO NAMED SPEAKER'S CHIEF OF STAFF

House Speaker Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) has tapped Dan Pero to be his chief of staff. Mr. Pero served in that capacity for former Governor John Engler and began his career in the political arena 41 years ago as a member of the House Republican staff.

Phil Goodrich will be his deputy chief of staff and consultant Stu Sandler of Grand River Strategies will serve as transition director.

SENATE PASSES ENERGY REFORM LEGISLATION

With just days of scheduled session remaining before the gavel comes down on the 95th Legislature, there is some question as to whether at long last both chambers pass and can send the long debated energy reform legislation to the Governor.

However, movement could be slowed due to Donald Trump's surprise victory in the presidential election.

Portions of the state legislation are designed to adhere to the general direction of President Barack Obama's energy policy such as broad EPA regulations and alternative energy subsidies.

The Senate before adjourning for the two week Thanksgiving break passed legislation (SB 437) to increase reliability to the state's electric market by creating more stringent requirements on how alternative providers receive the electricity it provides its customers.

That measure passed 26-11 with the support of DTE Energy, Consumers Energy and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

Alternative electric suppliers would still be allowed to sell 10 percent of the state's electricity load.

Under Senate Bill 436, which passed 26-10, Republicans agreed to increase the requirement that the amount of energy Michigan gets from renewable sources be increased from 10 to 15 percent by 2022.

VETO PEN PUT TO EARLY HICA PHASE OUT

Saying he didn't believe the federal government would sign off, Governor Rick Snyder vetoed the Republican approved Medicaid funding plan that would get rid of the Health Insurance Claims Assessment (HICA) 18 months early.

The idea, pushed by the business community, would change how some \$300-\$400 million of the state's Medicaid costs were paid by getting rid of HICA.

The affected legislation is in Senate Bills 987 through 990.

FORMER MIS PRESIDENT NAMED TED DIRECTOR

Roger Curtis, who has served as president of the Michigan International Speedway (MIS) for the last ten years, has been picked by Governor Rick Snyder to become the new director of the Michigan Department of Talent and Economic Development (TED).

Steve Arwood, who had been TED Director, will continue in his current role as CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).