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# This week in the Senate

## March 13 - March 17, 2017

The Senate this week set the stage for debate in the coming weeks on two significant pieces of legislation, a bill addressing the state's infrastructure system and the state's general appropriations bill.

The Senate Finance Committee voted to give a favorable report to [H. 3516](#), advancing it to the Senate floor for debate. The bill aims to address long-term infrastructure needs through increasing the motor fuel user fee two cents per year over six years. When fully implemented, it's estimated to generate approximately \$792 million.

Subcommittees of the Senate Finance Committee have conducted budget hearings to help craft the state budget ahead of it being considered by the full Committee and then debated on the Senate floor.

Areas of interest in the approximately \$8 billion budget include K-12 education funding, the state's pension system and Hurricane Matthew cleanup costs.

## **Bills approved by the Senate this week include:**

*The following bills were read the third time -*

**S. 185 - Senator Shealy:** Amends the definition of advertising by funeral service directors to include the internet and expands the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's regulatory activities in regard to third-party funeral service providers.

**S. 342 - Senators Williams, Davis, Hembree, Campbell, J. Matthews, Setzler, Grooms, Hutto, Allen, Johnson, Nicholson, Scott, M.B. Matthews, Rankin, Sabb, Goldfinch, Alexander, Climer and Senn:** Grants licensed surveyors the same immunity from liability that's provided to licensed engineers when voluntary services are rendered at the scene of a declared national or state emergency. License surveyors wouldn't be liable for personal injury, wrongful death, property damage or other losses that occur as a result of their actions or omissions while providing voluntary surveying services, unless gross negligence or recklessness is proven.

**S. 463 - Senators Cromer and Gambrell:** Adds excess disability insurance to those insurance policies that may be purchased through licensed brokers with out-of-state insurers. Excess disability insurance is disability insurance that exceeds any benefit limit available from an insurer licensed in South Carolina.

**S. 262 - Senator Setzler:** Establishes the Public Higher Education Textbook Policy to provide minimum guidelines for the Commission on Higher Education and the public institutions of higher education to follow regarding textbook policies in order to comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

**S. 483 - Senators Williams, Malloy, Setzler, Sheheen, Hembree and Rankin:** Directs the state treasurer to disburse funds lapsed to the general fund from the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund to the Town of Nichols for recovery expenses associated with the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

*The following bills were read the second time -*

**S. 114 - Senators Bennett and Senn:** Allows for donations of alcoholic beverages to nonprofits for specially licensed events, as long as the beverages are sold and delivered through wholesalers.

**S. 116 - Senators Rankin and Malloy:** Requires that a person permitted or licensed to sell alcohol for on-premises consumption maintain liability insurance with coverage of at least \$1 million during the period of the permit or license.

**S. 173 - Senators Sheheen and Turner:** Requires certain law enforcement officers to receive training in mental health and addictive disorder crisis intervention during their recertification period.

**S. 359 - Senator Cromer:** Gives the responsibility for keeping records related to investigations of possible unfair trade practices by motor fuel retailers solely to the Attorney General's office by no longer requiring the Department of Consumer Affairs to do so.

**S. 404 - Senators Campbell, Gregory, Reese and Williams:** Allows agribusiness operations or packaging operations to claim an income tax credit after meeting certain qualifications.

### **Look ahead to next week and beyond:**

The infrastructure bill reported out favorably by the Finance Committee, **H. 3516**, is expected to receive significant attention on the Senate floor next week. In addition, discussions of the state budget will likely dominate much of the work of the Senate Finance Committee and then the full Senate as the end of session approaches.