



*New Mexico Municipal League*

## LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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### COLD TEMPS, HOT TOPICS

The second week of the legislative session saw dozens of new bill introductions, including one of the League's priority bills – Senate Bill 197, which allows bonding of EMS Fund revenues. Key areas of discussion and debate included public safety and behavioral health, as well as paid family and medical leave.

Legislators heard, and passed out of committee, a proposal to expand the state's red flag law to allow law enforcement to temporarily remove firearms from individuals deemed a threat to themselves or others (House Bill 12). Legislators also passed out of committee a criminal competency law bill (House Bill 4) that proposes giving courts more flexibility when handling cases where a suspect is found incompetent to stand trial. Behavioral health initiatives were also on the agenda, as lawmakers debated how to expand and strengthen behavioral health facilities and provider networks throughout the state. A bill that would establish a paid family and medical leave program for most employees statewide (House Bill 11) also passed its first committee.

### League Priority Legislation

**Senate Bill 197**, sponsored by Senator Pete Campos and Representative Harlan Vincent, was introduced in the Senate this week. The bill allows recipients of EMS Fund monies to pledge those funds for debt service through the New Mexico Finance Authority's Public Project Revolving Fund, facilitating the purchase of ambulances or other EMS vehicles or equipment. The bill proposes the same eligible bonding uses for EMS Fund

#### Key legislative session dates:

Opening day (noon): *January 21*  
Deadline for introduction: *February 20*  
Session ends (noon): *March 22*  
Legislation not acted upon by governor is pocket vetoed: *April 11*

Your legislator can be reached by name through the legislative switchboard: (505) 986-4300 in Santa Fe. The Legislature's website ([www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov)) also contains legislator's email addresses. You can also check the League's website ([www.nmml.org](http://www.nmml.org)) for other League information.

See page 3 for a summary of how legislation is passed in New Mexico, as well as a list of legislative abbreviations.

revenues as are currently available for Fire Protection Fund and Law Enforcement Protection Fund revenues. SB197 has been referred to SHPAC and SFC, and the League will let members know how to help support this bill. *See a briefing sheet for SB197 at the end of this document.*

We anticipate that our other two priority bills – modernization of the Inspection of Public Records Act and the state’s Municipal Code – will be introduced in the House on Monday. We will share copies of those bills and more information as soon as they are introduced.

## Other Bills of Note

- **Legislators debated Senate Bills 21 and 22, bills intended to grant the state more authority over pollution and discharge into New Mexico’s waterways.** The bills propose the creation of a state-managed permitting system, in place of the current federally administered permitting system, and also enhance enforcement provisions over discharge violations, among other changes to the law. The Municipal League is in ongoing discussions with bill stakeholders to address concerns about potential increased liability as well as increased costs for local governments, and we are optimistic that legislators will address our concerns. Both bills passed through their first committee.
- **The League has concerns about Senate Bill 169, which proposes the Strategic Economic Development Site Readiness Act,** ostensibly to streamline economic development by allowing the state to assess and prepare strategic sites for investment. However, the bill raises concerns for local governments as it could override local permitting processes, land use regulations, and environmental reviews. Without clear provisions ensuring local input and compliance with local planning and zoning, the bill risks undermining municipal authority over land use decision.
- **The League also has concerns about Senate Bill 218,** which makes a number of updates to the state’s Election Code. Notably, the bill **repeals a section of law that allows municipalities to hold municipal officer elections in March**, and municipalities would therefore be required to participate in the regular local election. A number of municipalities have chosen not to opt in to regular local elections, and instead retain their own election administration, and the League views an attempt to remove this option as an unacceptable preemption of local authority.

## Other Substantive Legislation

The League tracks bills with potential impacts on municipalities. **You can view a real-time list of all [tracked bills](#) by policy area on our website**, under Legislative Information. Please note that tracking of a bill does not indicate any League position on the bill. For more information on specific legislation, please contact us!

## Anatomy of a Bill

A bill is introduced by a sponsoring legislator on the floor of either house, numbered by the clerk and referred for consideration to one or more committees of that house. The deadline for introduction of all bills except appropriations bills or bills requested by the Governor (special messages) is noon on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of a 60-day session or noon on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of a 30-day session.

Committee recommendations usually determine the success or failure of a bill. A bill may be amended in committee or on the floor at any point in the process – sometimes changed so significantly that its own author would not recognize it – or a substitute measure with the same number and general subject matter may be put in its place.

If you are interested in a particular bill, do not be discouraged if it seems to sit for a long time in committee, particularly in a tax, finance, or appropriations committee. Bills requesting money or taxing authority often lie dormant until the last few days of a session and then move quickly.

If a bill passes successfully through its committee referrals, it returns to the floor of the chamber in which it was introduced for floor consideration. If it passes that chamber, it goes to the other chamber. However, it may also be tabled, referred again, or defeated.

In the second chamber the bill is again considered in one or several committees and it may again be amended or substituted. If it gets through its committee assignments, it returns to the floor of that chamber for consideration and may from there be referred, tabled, passed, or defeated.

If the bill passes the second chamber after being amended or substituted, the originating chamber must concur or fail to concur with the changes. If the originating chamber fails to concur, a conference committee representing both chambers is appointed to decide what to present to both chambers for acceptance.

A bill that has been passed by both the House and the Senate goes to the Governor for signature. The Governor may choose to sign or veto the bill. If the bill contains an appropriation, the Governor may veto portions if she wishes (*line-item veto*); if it does not, she may only veto the entire bill. If vetoed, 2/3 of the House and 2/3 of the Senate must vote in favor of the bill in order to override the veto. If the veto override fails, the bill dies.

Most bills do not reach the Governor's desk before the Legislature adjourns. The Governor has 20 days following the close of the session to sign, veto, or fail to sign (*pocket veto*) any bill that he or she did not act on during the session. In New Mexico, very few bills make it all the way to enactment. The historic trend in New Mexico is for more and more introductions each succeeding session.

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## General Abbreviation Codes

HB – House Bill  
HCR – House Concurrent Resolution  
HJR – House Joint Resolution  
HJM – House Joint Memorial  
HM – House Memorial

SB – Senate Bill  
SCR – Senate Concurrent Resolution  
SJR – Senate Joint Resolution  
SJM – Senate Joint Memorial  
SM – Senate Memorial  
\* - Contains Emergency Clause  
CA – Constitutional Amendment

### **House Committees**

HAFC – Appropriations and Finance  
HAGC – Agriculture and Water Resources  
HCEDC – Commerce and Economic Development  
HCPAC – Consumer and Public Affairs  
HCW – Committee of the Whole  
HEC – Education  
HENRC – Energy, Environment and Natural Resources  
HHHC – Health and Human Services  
HJC – Judiciary  
HLLC – Local Government, Land Grants and Cultural Affairs  
HLVMC – Labor, Veterans’ and Military Affairs  
HRC – Rules and Order of Business  
HSEIC – State Government, Elections & Indian Affairs  
HTPWC – Transportation, Public Works & Capital Improvements  
HTRC – Taxation and Revenue

### **Senate Committees**

SCC – Committee’s Committee  
SCONC – Conservation  
SCW – Committee of the Whole  
SEC – Education  
SFC – Finance  
SHPAC – Health and Public Affairs  
SIRC – Indian, Rural and Cultural Affairs  
SJC – Judiciary  
SRC – Rules  
STBTC – Tax, Business and Transportation



## Senate Bill 197: Allow Bonding of EMS Fund Revenues

Senator Pete Campos

Representative Harlan Vincent

**Senate Bill 197 allows bonding of Emergency Medical Services Act (EMS) fund revenues, enabling local EMS departments to pledge revenues for debt service to purchase emergency vehicles, mirroring the Fire Protection Fund**

- Currently, Fire Protection Fund revenues may be used for debt service, such as purchasing fire trucks. SB197 proposes the same debt service ability for EMS Fund revenues, enabling the purchase of an ambulance, for example.
- EMS capital costs are high (*see examples in sidebar*) and increasing, often making it cost-prohibitive for smaller local governments to purchase vehicles and medical equipment outright.
- SB197 allows recipients of EMS Fund revenues to pledge those funds for debt service through the New Mexico Finance Authority's Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF).

### EMS Capital Cost Examples

- Ambulance – \$200,000+
- Power Gurney and load system – \$40,000+
- Multi-platform cardiac monitor / defibrillator / pacemaker – \$30,000+
- Advanced life support ventilator – \$10,000+

### Overview of EMS Fund

- In 2024, SB 151 increased EMS Fund revenues from approximately \$2.9 million to \$13.9 million
- Beginning in FY26, 5 percent – approximately \$11 million – of health insurance premium taxes will be directed to the EMS Fund
- 75% of funding goes to local EMS services (nearly 300 EMS services statewide), based on call volume, population, and service coverage area
  - Services receive minimum funding amounts based on level of service provided
  - Eligible expenditures: establishment or enhancement of local EMS; operational costs other than salaries and benefits; purchase, repair and maintenance of EMS vehicles, equipment and supplies; implementation of prevention programs; and training and licensing of local EMS personnel
- 22% goes to systemwide projects (18% to special projects, including purchase of vehicles, funded on a competitive application basis, and 4% for trauma system development) and 3% is used for administration