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Statehouse Report

March 16, 2009

House and Senate committees are back at work this week, considering each other's legislation. Committee schedules will reach full load, and bills will begin moving to consideration by the full chambers in the coming weeks leading up to the April 15 deadline for bills to pass both chambers.

State Tax Revenues

Indiana's February tax collections were ten percent lower than last year, and about \$42 million less than had been projected. These decreases are on top of the December revenue projections which already had Indiana looking at a \$900 million decrease. For the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, income tax revenue is already five percent below 2008 levels. The two previous years in which revenues exceeded five percent less than the previous year's collections were 2002 and 1980.

State Stimulus Dollars

The House Transportation and Environmental Affairs Committees will be holding a joint meeting this week to hear a presentation on federal stimulus funds available for improvements for both transportation and water infrastructure projects. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, at 10:30 a.m. in the House Chamber. The meeting will be broadcast over the Internet, and can be accessed live [here](#).

Unemployment

An unemployment report released last week by the U.S. Labor Department shows that Indiana lost over 12,000 jobs in January, and its unemployment rate rose to 9.2 percent -- the highest level in a quarter-century. About 90 percent of those lost jobs hit the state's manufacturers as the recession continued to spread beyond recreational vehicle manufacturers and the real estate industry. However, the report also showed slight job growth in government, heavy construction, and leisure and hospitality.

Meanwhile, the [Senate Pension and Labor Committee](#) is continuing its work on reaching a compromise solution to funding the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Preferences for Indiana Businesses

[SB 136](#) has passed unanimously out of the House [Committee on Small Business and Economic Development](#) after also passing the full Senate by a unanimous vote. The bill repeals the expiration date for the section of Indiana Code that gives preference to "Indiana Businesses" when the state is awarding contracts. The statutory criteria for what constitutes "Indiana Businesses" are: 1) principal place of business is located in Indiana, 2) pays a majority of its payroll (in dollar volume) to residents of Indiana, 3) employs Indiana residents as a majority of its employees, 4) makes significant capital investments in Indiana, or 5) has a substantial positive economic impact on Indiana.

Senate Bills of interest that have passed out of House committee

- [SB 098](#) - Mental health Medicaid quality advisory committee
- [SB 102](#) - Coverage of mental health services in CHIP
- [SB 136](#) - Indiana businesses
- [SB 202](#) - Lead-based paint activities
- [SB 270](#) - Occupational certification requirements
- [SB 393](#) - Attracting primary care physicians for shortage areas
- [SB 423](#) - Substitute natural gas contracts
- [SB 438](#) - Self-directed care
- [SB 553](#) - Bicycles and traffic safety

House Bills of interest that have passed out of Senate committee

- [HB1037](#) - Product transfer between beer wholesalers
- [HB1081](#) - Rental property foreclosure notices
- [HB1180](#) - Ticket seller interference software
- [HB1193](#) - E85 fueling station grant program
- [HB1358](#) - Eligibility for purchasing property at tax sales
- [HB1428](#) - Unlawful manufacture or sale of police or fire insignias
- [HB1514](#) - Accounting for public funds
- [HB1671](#) - Nursing scholarships
- [HB1637](#) - Funding for foreclosure counseling

How to track legislative action.

The [web page for the Indiana General Assembly](#) is a free resource for the public that provides some helpful tools to follow the progress of legislative action during the session. You can [find out how to contact your legislator](#), read [all of the filed bills](#), and search the [Indiana Constitution, Indiana Code, and Indiana Register](#).

You can also watch live streaming video of the legislature while it is in session, as well as some committee meetings [here](#).

The regularly updated House and Senate Committee schedules are also available online, and contain links to legislation up for consideration in committee.

[House Committee Schedule](#)

[Senate Committee Schedule](#)



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