

Legislative Report for MAT
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Governor Jennifer Granholm has delivered her seventh State of the State address. She commented that Michigan will weather the economic storm because we are resourceful and resilient. The Governor plans on fighting for more good paying jobs, educating and training people to fill those jobs and protecting citizens during these economic hard times. Granholm suggested government reforms and promised to reduce the number of state departments. She asked the State Employee Compensation Commission to reduce elected officials' pay by 10 percent. Granholm suggests that by 2020, Michigan will reduce its use of imported energy and fossil fuels by 45 percent by increasing use of renewable energy sources. She ended with saying that "This is a time that demands relentless focus and discipline."

Representative Marty Knollenberg, R-Troy has reintroduced legislation (HB 4080) that would end lifetime benefits for lawmakers. Knollenberg introduced the same measure last term. "Lifetime benefits for six short years of work is completely out of touch with the realities those we represent are facing," Knollenberg said.

Senate Bill 1, sponsored by Senator Mark Jansen, R-Grand Rapids, phases out the 21.99 percent surcharge on the Michigan Business Tax by 2010. The bill would drop the tax down to 11 percent in 2009. The tax was born in December 2007 to replace the use tax expansion on some services, which business groups warned would cripple them. The bill has passed the Senate and resides in the House Tax Policy Committee for further debate. The Department of Treasury opposes the bill.

Senate Bill 198, sponsored by Senator Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, clarifies the use tax exemption for industrial processing equipment for sawmill operations. The bill was referred to the Senate Finance Committee. Representative Steve Lindberg, D-Marquette will sponsor legislation to clarify the sales tax exemption on industrial processing equipment.

House Bill 4200, sponsored by Rep. Mike Lahti, D-Hancock, has been referred to the House Tax Policy Committee. The bill provides a property tax exemption for adjoining and contiguous timber cut over property under certain conditions.

House Bill 4201, sponsored by Rep. Steve Lindberg, D-Marquette, has been referred to the House Tourism, Outdoor and Natural Resources Committee. The bill revises policy for granting easements across state owned land.

Representative Kate Ebli, D-Monroe has sponsored HB 4224, the bill has been referred to the House Transportation Committee. The measure allows a slasher to legally be hauled down the road.

Representative Brian Calley, R-Portland, and Senator Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt, have agreed to sponsor legislation to allow woodlots to be defined as qualified agricultural property.

Language has been forwarded to Rep. Mike Lahti, D-Hancock to assist in crafting a legislative MBT fix for loggers.