

# Mid-Session Legislative Update

47<sup>th</sup> Legislature

March 4, 2005

Today is the 54<sup>th</sup> day of the 47<sup>th</sup> Legislative session.

There are 1240 introduced **bills**, 1 bill passed and was signed by the Governor:  
SB1065 historical advisory commission

There are 124 introduced **memorials and resolutions** and 1 Senate memorial passed:  
SM1001 collegiate housing and infrastructure

The legislature maintains the target goal of ending session by April 15<sup>th</sup>, the 96<sup>th</sup> day of the current session.

## Game and Fish FY06-07 BUDGET

The Game and Fish budget has been adopted by the House and Senate. As requested, we received an appropriation for a replacement of field enforcement vehicles and aircraft engines from both the House and the Senate. The Senate also appropriated \$101,000 to the base budget. Items not provided for in either budget include a telephone switch and one FTE. Because of the \$101,000 differential, the budget will be determined in Conference committee.

The budget will be sent to the Governor by March 15.

## Status of Bills SUPPORTED by the Game and Fish Commission

### **HB2127 big game permits; compassionate transfer**

Passed from the House (47-12) on Feb. 14. The bill was referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Rural Affairs committee (NRRA) but has not yet been posted on an agenda.

### **HB2169 land use planning; water resources (O'Halleran)**

Failed in the House Natural Resources and Agriculture committee (NRA) with a 3-5 vote on Feb. 7.

### **HB2174 drought emergency water transfers (O'Halleran)**

On Feb. 28 the emergency water transfer bill passed unanimously from the House. The bill has been assigned to the Senate NRRA, but has not yet been scheduled for a hearing. DWR plans to attach a striker amendment to the bill that would include HB2174 and provisions of HB2177. HB2177 is a DWR bill that establishes a fund, derived from fees paid to DWR, to provide for the evaluation and determination of adequate water supplies.

**HB2276 healthy forest amendments (O'Halleran)**

This bill amends the healthy forest law that was passed in 2004 that provides sales, use and income tax incentives to qualified businesses that harvest and process forest products. O'Halleran's additions modify some of the requirements for qualifying for the income tax credits and provide property tax incentives for property owned by qualifying businesses for five years.

HB2276 was amended on Feb. 7 in the House NRA to replace an architect as an existing member of the Wildland-urban Fire Safety Committee with a person who works in the logging or forest industry. The bill passed unanimously from the House Ways and Means committee on Feb. 8 and has not yet been assigned to a COW or consent calendar.

**HB2295 animal and ecological terrorism (Biggs)****SB1333 animal and ecological terrorism (Verschoor)**

HB2295 passed in House COW on March 3 and has not yet been posted on a third read calendar. SB1333 passed out of the Senate with an 18-11 vote on Feb. 3.

Department personnel met with both sponsors to attach an amendment, allowing the Commission to establish hunting areas by Commission order rather than rule, if significant interference or disruption of a hunt is likely to occur.

A similar version of these identical bills was vetoed last session by Gov. Napolitano. Sen. Verschoor explained that to increase the likeliness of the legislation being signed by the Governor this session, the bills are on a "fast track" to the Governor's desk. Thus, although both sponsors agreed they could support this amendment and were willing to attach it to the bills, the sponsors ultimately decided not to amend the bills. Both members said they were willing to add the amendment to another bill.

**HB2440 state lottery (Rep McComish)**

The state lottery bill clarifies the distributions of lottery revenues. The bill passed unanimously from the House Government Reform and Finance Accountability (GRGFA) committee on Feb. 16 with an amendment that allows periodic transfers of money to the beneficiaries based on annual estimated revenues. The bill was held in Rep. Pearce's Appropriations Committee. At this point, the Heritage Fund is still the third beneficiary with a maximum limit of \$20 million. We will continue to monitor this bill closely to ensure that the Heritage Fund is not rearranged further down the list of beneficiaries.

**HB2613 healthy forest amendments (Chase)**

This bill is pursuant to the 2004 healthy forest legislation. Its primary provision expands the requirements to qualify for forest product tax incentives and encourages local governments to provide incentives to businesses that promote forest health. The bill passed unanimously from the NRA and GRGFA and has not yet been placed on a COW or consent calendar.

**HB2643 lower Colorado River; conservation (O'Halleran)**

The lower Colorado River multispecies conservation bill unanimously passed out of the House NRA and Appropriations. The bill has not been assigned to a COW or consent calendar yet.

**SB1271 schools; gun safety program (Johnson)**

Department staff met with Sen. Johnson to clean-up the bill language to conform to the Department's existing Scholastic Clay Target Shooting Program and to allow more flexibility than prescribed by the original version. For example, the amended version allows the program to take place on all shooting ranges, rather than only Federal ranges.

The bill passed unanimously from the Senate. The House K-12 committee passed the bill on March 2 with a 7-1 vote (Rep. Garcia voted "no"). Two testimonies were provided, one from the Department and one from the bill sponsor, but no questions were asked by committee members, therefore we are unsure of Rep. Garcia's specific concerns with the bill.

**SB1337 forest health amendments (Jarrett)**

This bill makes various changes to statutes governing forests and forest health. SB1337 was recently approved in COW and is not currently assigned to a third read calendar.

**SB1349 wildlife; unlawful feeding (Hellon)**

As provided in a memo sent last week regarding SB1349, the feeding bill failed in the Senate NRRRA committee (3-4) on Feb. 16. NRRRA Chairman, Sen. Flake, has said he will find a bill for striker amendment regarding wildlife feeding. The Department has modified the text of the bill to address some of the committee members' concerns. The modified version addresses concerns from the first committee hearing.

**SB1365 game and fish; fees (Cannell)**

The fee increase bill will be voted on by the full Senate on Tues, March 8. We have already begun meeting with House members to identify support and address potential concerns.

**Status of Bills OPPOSED by the Game and Fish Commission****HB2554 state lake improvement fund (Groe)**

This bill prohibited using SLIF monies on non-gas powered lakes. Department personnel communicated the Department's concerns to the bill sponsor and as a result the bill was held in the House NRA committee.

**SB1067 appropriation, Zuni water settlement (Flake)**

As explained in a memo sent last week, SB1067 was amended to appropriate \$1.6 million from the Game and Fish Heritage Fund rather than the State General Fund. The bill passed out of the Senate Appropriations committee on Feb. 15 and was approved in COW on March 3 and will be voted on by the full Senate on March 6.

Although research for alternative funding sources was suggested by committee members, no amendments have been proposed and supporters of the Heritage Fund continue to oppose the bill with the Heritage Fund amendment. The Governor's office has expressed concerns with the bill as well.