



The WI State Assembly and Senate are now recessed and will not reconvene until January 2019. In the meantime, legislators' focus will shift to preparing legislation and budget items for next session and the upcoming 2018 elections.

Following is a report on the latest round of bills on which we've worked.

Administrative Rules – [SB 15](#) better known as the REINS Act (Regulatory Executives in Need of Scrutiny), this is an effort to rein in unelected bureaucrats. The REINS Act requires legislative approval for any rule promulgated by a state agency that will have an economic impact of \$10 million or more over a two year period. *Signed into law as WI Act 57. MWFPA Supported.*

High Capacity Wells – [SB 76](#) streamlines the regulations faced by operators of high capacity wells, which are used by farmers and other businesses across Wisconsin. This legislation allows high capacity well owners to maintain, repair, replace and transfer ownership of their already permitted high capacity wells without having to go through another lengthy review process. *Signed into law as WI Act 10. MWFPA Supported.*

Industrial Hemp – [SB 119](#) allows Wisconsin farmers to grow industrial hemp. It will allow WI to establish a hemp pilot program and once again give farmers the ability to legally grow industrial hemp. *Signed into law as WI Act 100. MWFPA Supported.*

Renewable Energy – [SB 144](#) creates renewable resource credits for industrial processes that employ waste heat for reuse within the facility to meet energy needs. *Signed into law as WI Act 53. MWFPA Supported.*

Personal Property Tax – [SB 218](#) would exempt all personal property beginning with January 1, 2018 property tax assessments. SB 218 received a public hearing before the State Senate Revenue Committee. The Assembly Ways and Means Committee also held a public hearing on the companion bill, AB 277. *MWFPA Supported.* Note: Partial repeal of the personal property tax was achieved as part of WI Act 59, the biennial budget.

Administrative Rules – [SB 295](#) requires that each chapter of the Wisconsin Administrative Code expire seven years after the chapter takes effect, subject to a schedule to be created by the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules. The companion bill, AB 384 passed the Assembly in an amended form. The Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform held a hearing on the bill and took no further action. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Supported.*

Family & Medical Leave – [SB 490](#) exempts from the WI state family and medical leave law an employer that is covered under the federal family and medical leave law. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform which did not hold a hearing on the bill. Its companion bill, AB 772 was referred to the Assembly Committee on Labor which did not hold a hearing on the bill. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Supported.*

Agriculture Producer Security Program – [SB 599](#) made changes to the Wisconsin's Agricultural Producer Security Program including exempting vegetable contractors who spend less than \$15,000 per year to procure processing vegetables from vegetable producers and producer agents from licensing requirements, paying fees and assessments, and filing annual financial statements. *Signed into law as WI Act 155. MWFPA Supported.*

State Agency Authority – [SB 745](#) eliminates sue and settle regulation, establishes parameters on guidance documents, and prohibits agency deference in the court system. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform which amended the bill and recommended adoption. The Senate did not bring the bill to the floor. Its companion bill, AB 880, was referred to the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules which did not hold a hearing. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Supported.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 1](#) increases the work requirement from 20 hours a week to 30 hours for all adults on FoodShare. Passed by the legislature. *Signed into law as WI Act 263. MWFPA Monitored.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 2](#) requires able-bodied parents of children on FoodShare to work or participate in job training to receive more than three months of benefits. Passed by the legislature. *Signed into law as WI Act 264. MWFPA Monitored.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 3](#) places asset limits on FoodShare and W-2 programs to exclude people with homes valued at more than \$321,200 and personal vehicles worth more than \$20,000. Passed by the legislature. *Signed into law as WI Act 269. MWFPA Monitored.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 4](#) implements work requirements and drug testing for public housing programs. Passed by the Legislature. *Signed into law as WI Act 265. MWFPA Monitored.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 5](#) establishes a pilot program to pay out the earned income tax credit monthly, rather than annually, for some individuals. Passed by the legislature. *Signed into law as WI Act 270. MWFPA Monitored.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 6](#) creates a "pay for performance" system for contractors that provide services in the state's worker training programs. Passed by the legislature. *Signed into law as WI Act 266. MWFPA Monitored.*

FoodShare – [Special Session AB 10](#) authorizes new state food stamp cards that include photo identification. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

Snap Changes – [AB 263](#) provides incentive programs for counties and tribes that identify fraudulent activity in certain public assistance programs. The bill was referred to Assembly Committee on Public Benefit Reform. Its companion bill, SB 174, was referred to the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

Environment – [AB 264](#) increases the amount of time an entity has to correct environmental violations found as part of the environmental compliance audit program administered by the WI DNR. The amount of time is increased from 90 days to 180 days for most violations and to 360 days if the correction involves a pollution prevention modification. The bill was referred to the Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry. *Failed to Pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

Beekeeping Tax Exemption – [AB 278](#) would expand the current beekeeper tax exemption to any beekeeper, regardless of the number of hives maintained. Currently, beekeepers with 50 or more hives don't have to pay sales tax on equipment and other items needed for their business. The bill had a hearing before the Assembly Ag Committee. *Failed to Pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

Homemade Baked Goods – [AB 360](#) allows for the limited face-to-face sale of certain homemade baked and canned foods without a licensing requirement. Under current law, such individuals would typically need to obtain a food processing plant license or retail food establishment license from the WI DATCP, or an agent city or county. AB 360 was referred to the Assembly Committee on Small Business Development where it received a hearing. Its companion bill, [SB 271](#) passed the Senate with an amendment increasing the dollar cap on annual gross receipts from the sale of qualifying goods from \$7,500 to \$25,000. The Assembly failed to act on the Senate bill. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

Bakeries – [AB 412](#) establishes that performing the activities of a bakery does not require a food processing license and is not subject to rules promulgated by WI DATCP governing the operation of facilities at which food is manufactured or prepared. In addition, the bill provides that a bakery is not required to be licensed as a retail food establishment and is not subject to rules promulgated by DATCP governing the operation of retail food establishments. The bill was referred to the Assembly Committee on State Affairs which did not hold a hearing on the measure. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

SNAP Program – [AB 501](#) directs the WI Department of Health Services to create a 10-month pilot program for a healthy eating incentive in the FoodShare program (SNAP). The bill specifies that the pilot incentive is to be provided as a discount at the point-of-sale on fresh produce and other healthy foods. It passed the Assembly after being amended and was referred to the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations which did not hold a hearing. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Monitored.*

Snap Program – [AB 530](#) requires the WI Department of Health Services to develop and conduct a pilot program to use FoodShare benefits (SNAP) for foods, food products, and beverages that have sufficient nutritional value. The Assembly passed the bill with an amendment. The Senate did not act on the bill. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Opposed.*

Food Bank Donations – [AB 577](#) requires the WI DATCP to award an annual grant to a nonprofit organization that operates as a statewide association of food banks to promote the donation of excess and unmarketable farm and food products from farms and food processing facilities to foodbanks. This measure and its companion bill, SB 487, passed out of their respective committees. Both bills failed to be taken up in their respective houses. *Failed to pass. MWFPA Supported.*

Local Regulation of Employment – [AB 748](#) standardizes employment law across the state by prohibiting local governmental units from enacting their own employment law regulations. *Awaiting executive action. MWFPA Supported.*

Tort Reform – [AB 773](#) modernizes Wisconsin’s civil procedures for discovery and class actions. An amendment to the bill eliminated a provisions limiting discovery of electronically stored information. *Signed into law as WI Act 235. MWFPA Supported.*

Rural Economic Development Grants – [AB 912](#) would have created a \$50 million appropriation to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to expend moneys for economic development programs benefiting rural counties. *Failed to Pass. MWFPA Supported.*

Watershed Protection Grants – [AB 946](#) increases funding to DATCP’s Watershed Protection Grant program by \$500,000 in each year of the current biennium. The program funding level had been at \$250,000. *Signed into law as WI Act 196. MWFPA Supported.*

If you have questions on any of the above please call Nick George or Brian Elliott at 608-255-9946.