



2019 MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE REPORT
Midwest Food Products Association
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The Minnesota Legislature is nearing the halfway point of the 2019 legislative session. They will also observe a Spring/Easter Recess April 15-22.

Committees in the House and Senate have been moving at a frenzied pace to meet the first legislative committee deadline, which was last Friday at midnight. The first legislative committee deadline required that all bills containing policy proposals be heard in all germane committees in the chamber it was first introduced (House or Senate). This was the first of three committee deadlines.

Nearly 5,000 bills have been introduced by legislators in 2019 thus far. If a policy bill did not receive a hearing by last Friday, then technically it cannot move forward and will not become law this year. Last week was widely considered one of the busiest weeks at the Capitol with Committee meetings extending well into the late night hours.

Legislation known as the Omnibus Ag Policy Bill held over from last year that would make mostly technical amendments and changes requested by the Department of Agriculture is making its way through the committee process. [HF 1733](#) passed the House Agriculture Committee last week on an unusual party-line vote after amendments were added that would allow cities of the first class to possibly regulate pesticide products instead of being pre-empted by the Department of Agriculture, and another that could require farms raising cervidae (deer) affected by Chronic Wasting Disease to be euthanized even when indemnity funds were not available. The Senate version of the bill has received bipartisan support thus far, and contains a measure expanding the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit program to include family and next-of-kin.

Monday this week the House Property Tax Subcommittee considered legislation increasing the school levy property tax rebate from 40% to 100% as well as a bill ([HF 1430](#) – Torkelson) to provide a tax credit for lands enrolled in conservation buffers. The Agriculture Committees also held hearings this week on the Department of Agriculture's proposed budget.

MWFPA issued a letter to House Majority Leader Winkler (DFL – Golden Valley) in support of his bill ([HF 1500](#)) to authorize the State of Minnesota to issue provisional driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants who pass appropriate driving tests and acquire automobile insurance. The bill has been making its way through the House committee process and is expected to be considered by the full House on April 2. The legislation does not yet have a companion in the Senate.

Finally, the Minnesota Legislature is advancing proposals that mandate up to 24 weeks of paid leave, or 44 percent of work days in a year. This mandate would apply to all private-sector employers, regardless of size.

If enacted, Minnesota would be the only state in the nation with such expansive and expensive mandates. [HF5/SF 1060](#) would create an expansive, state-administered, 24-week paid leave insurance program on all employers and employees (12 weeks parental and family leave plus 12 weeks medical leave). It is financed through a new tax on employers and employees and would be administered by new state bureaucracy.

HF 11/SF 1597 is modeled after an ordinance in Minneapolis, and creates an expansive, statewide mandate on employers to offer at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked. The bill does not exempt small businesses. However, there are carve-outs for collective bargaining agreements and the construction industry. Employers face much greater liability, stricter recordkeeping requirements and stiff penalties for violations. The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is taking the lead in organizing opposition to these bills.