

Kansas Legislature Gavels Out for First Adjournment

The Kansas Legislature adjourned the regular 2010 legislative session just after 12:00 a.m. on March 31st. The House and Senate will reconvene on April 28th for the veto session. The following is a brief summary of some of KIOGA's priority issues:

Budget

The budget bill will be worked and passed during the veto session. While on break, legislators will learn the March state tax revenues and the April 16th Consensus Revenue Estimating Group projections for the remainder of FY 2010 and FY 2011. There appears to be a battle looming between the House and the Senate on how to pass a balanced budget. The Senate is pushing for \$350 million in tax increases and are considering various measures including eliminating sales tax exemptions, a statewide sales tax increase, cigarette and tobacco tax increases, and liquor tax increases. Also on the table is a proposal by Senate Democrats to increase income taxes. The House is working on balancing the budget without tax increases. The House/Senate battle will begin on April 28th when the veto session kicks-off. The veto session will likely extend into mid-May.

Greenhouse Gas Regulations

Senator Tim Huelskamp (R-Fowler) introduced a resolution opposing the EPA's greenhouse gas regulation by rulemaking. KIOGA testified in support of the resolution emphasizing that harmful, top-down policies that would affect the price and availability of energy for every American consumer should not be carried out by unelected EPA officials. The resolution passed the Senate 34-3 and is now being sent to U.S. Congressional leadership and the EPA Administrator. KIOGA is also working with Kansas House and Senate leadership to strengthen Kansas opposition to EPA's use of the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

Fee Fund Sweeps

Earlier this month, House Democratic leadership formally filed a complaint against House Speaker Mike O'Neal (R-Hutchinson) asserting that his representation of plaintiffs suing the State for sweeping of funds into the State General Fund constitutes misbehavior. O'Neal said there is nothing wrong with pressing a lawsuit to test the constitutionality of such funds sweeps by the Legislature. They're either OK or they're not. House Minority Leader Paul Davis (D-Lawrence) said that O'Neal had not violated any laws, any legislative rules, or any special codes of conduct for lawyers, but that O'Neal has tarnished the image of the House and should be punished. A six-member legislative panel (3 Republicans and 3 Democrats) was appointed to investigate the complaint. On March 30th, the panel unanimously voted to dismiss the complaint but urged the Legislature to put together some rules about conduct dealing with lawyer-legislators representing clients against the State.

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Upcoming Events

2010 AAPG Annual Convention

April 11-14, 2010
New Orleans,
Louisiana

KIOGA Midyear Meeting

April 22-23, 2010
Great Bend, Kansas

SPE Improved Oil Recovery Symposium

April 24-28, 2010
Tulsa, Oklahoma

AIPG Hydraulic Fracturing Conference

May 5-6, 2010
Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania