
Government Affairs Update



North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

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North Carolina News:

Beach Plan

The House gave final approval to **HB 1305 (Beach Plan Changes)**, introduced by **Rep. Hugh Holliman (D-Davidson)**, <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/House/PDF/H1305v3.pdf>. This bill changes the Beach Plan in ways that are aimed at helping the plan survive a catastrophic storm.

N.C. Association of REALTORS® staff were successful in having two amendments adopted in the House Finance Committee. The first, introduced by **Rep. Bill Owens (D-Pasquotank)**, provides that the 1% deductible for Beach Plan policies will only be charged after a named storm event. The second, introduced by **Rep. Danny McComas (R-New Hanover)**, removed the requirement that all properties in the Beach Plan carry flood insurance irrespective of whether the property is located in a flood hazard area.

N.C. Association of REALTORS® staff will continue to work to address our members' concerns as the bill moves through the Senate.

State Budget Update

State government will continue operating without a permanent budget, pursuant to **HB 1504 (Continuing Budget Authority)**. The House and the Senate have approved this second stopgap spending plan that funds state government at 84% of the current budget until July 31, 2009. Gov. Beverly Perdue signed the measure shortly after it cleared both chambers.

Land Use Decisions

SB 44 (Appeals of Quasi-Judicial Land Decisions),

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S44v5.pdf>, introduced by **Sen. Ellie Kinnaird (D-Orange)**, passed the House last week. This legislation sets out the details of who can appeal a court decision on land use, how it is to be appealed and when the appeal can be made. NC Association of REALTORS® staff worked on changes over a series of months with other stakeholders to ensure that the existing rights of property owners will not be diminished. The bill now heads back to the Senate for concurrence.

Permit Extensions

SB 831 (Extend Permits Regarding Land Development), introduced by **Sen. Dan Clodfelter (D-Mecklenburg)**, <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S831v4.pdf>, will grant an automatic 6 month extension of all building permits. This bill passed the House this week and will be returned to the Senate for concurrence next week.

Wind Energy

This week **SB 1068 (Permitting of Wind Energy Facilities)**, introduced by **Sen. Charlie Albertson (D-Duplin)**, <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S1068v3.pdf>, which regulates wind turbines in the mountains and along the coast of North Carolina cleared the Senate Finance Committee. During the debate on the Senate floor, however, an amendment allowing the turbines to be placed on ridge lines drew a great deal of criticism from **Sen. Martin Nesbitt (D-Buncombe)**. The bill was then returned to the Senate Committee on Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources for further discussion.

National News:

Health Reform Update/NAR Participates in Senate Small Business Committee Health Reform Roundtable

Efforts to reform the health care system continue to be the focus of numerous and difficult discussions on Capitol Hill. In the Senate, Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) continues to work with both Democratic and Republican members of his Finance Committee on drafting a reform bill that could successfully garner bipartisan support. If discussions are successful, a Finance reform bill could be introduced the week of July 13th. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee continued to work through 300+ filed amendments to Chairman Edward Kennedy's alternative health reform bill. HELP deliberations begin again on July 13th. And in the House, plans to introduce a formal reform measure on July 10th faltered as the chairmen of the three committees with jurisdiction continued to deal with concerns of moderate Democrats needed to assure successful passage of a reform bill. Plans are now to introduce the bill early in this week with the Energy and Commerce Committee to begin consideration shortly thereafter.

NAR's effort to advocate for reforms needed by Realtors also continued. On Thursday, July 9th, the Senate Small Business Committee held a Roundtable discussion with small business representatives to discuss the needs of the self-employed and small employers. Ron Phipps, NAR's First Vice President, was invited to participate. As one of two small businessmen – as opposed to representatives of organizations representing small businesses – Mr. Phipps ably laid out the unique needs of real estate agents, brokers and firm owners that must be considered in the health reform debate. The Roundtable was the third in a series of meetings in the past two weeks with the White House, Department of Health and Human Services and the Senate at which Mr. Phipps represented NAR's members. NAR continues to work with Congress and the Administration to make sure the needs of Realtors are met in a final proposal, but has not taken a formal position at this time on any of the bills being considered.

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