

June 12, 2025

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## Appropriations

### Casino Gaming Tax Running Ahead of REC Projection

Gambling tax collections for the month of May were stronger than what had been coming into the state's coffers in recent months, according to data from the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission.

For the month, state casinos paid \$28.6 million in gaming tax. This is an increase of \$1.6 million when compared to April. May's collections were still half a million dollars less than what the state collected last May. With one month left in Fiscal Year 2025, casino gaming tax has, so far, brought in \$288.5 million to the state. When compared to the same period a year ago, collections are down \$14.8 million. But as it has been all year, actual collections continue to be higher than what the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) has projected. In March, the REC expected casino tax revenue to fall by \$33.1 million.

On the other side is Sports Wagering tax, which saw higher collections in May. The state collected \$1.355 million in taxes on sports bets last month, which is \$233,000 more than last May's figure. For the year, sports wagering has generated \$14.93 million in revenue. For the fiscal year, this is \$1.4 million more than was collected during the first eleven months of FY 2024. For all of FY 2024, the state took in \$14.3 million in sports wagering tax.

Iowa's sports wagering tax collections may see a further boost in the future, thanks to the Illinois Legislature. The Democrat-controlled state raised taxes on sportsbook profits last year. This year they have come back with another tax on sports gambling by implementing a per wager fee on all bets placed in the state. Illinois will assess a 25-cent fee on every wager. If a sportsbook handles more than 20 million wagers a year, then the fee goes to 50 cents for every wager over the 20 million threshold. It would not be a surprise if the entities running the sports wagering business in the Land of Lincoln start encouraging their customers to take the short drive to Iowa to place their bets in a state with the lowest sports wagering tax in the nation.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

## Agriculture

### Governor Signs IDALS Departmental/Code Update Bill

On Friday, June 6, 2025, Governor Reynolds signed and enacted Senate File 632, which was the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) departmental bill. SF 632 makes a number of updates concerning various for programs and regulations related to agriculture, including crop production,

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animal health, agricultural processing, and agricultural marketing, which are part of the powers and duties of the IDALS. The measure includes for the assessment of some fees and provide for some penalties. The measure introduces notable changes to the regulation of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizers and soil conditioners, which would if the measure is enacted be referred to as 'beneficial substances.' The bill aims to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of agricultural practices by updating definitions, licensing requirements, and inspection protocols. It removes outdated terminology and incorporates new language to reflect current agricultural practices and scientific understanding. Furthermore, the legislation emphasizes the importance of proper labeling and registration of agricultural input products to ensure compliance and safety. Overall, the act seeks to streamline agricultural regulations while promoting sustainable practices.

Key aspects of the bill include:

- (a) changes the term 'soil conditioner' to 'beneficial substance,' which includes various plant and soil amendments,
- (b) updates definitions related to fertilizers and beneficial substances to align with current agricultural practices,
- (c) establishes new licensing requirements for manufacturers and distributors of fertilizers and beneficial substances,
- (d) implements stricter labeling requirements to ensure transparency and compliance in the agricultural market, and
- (e) removes outdated references to the 'State Chemist' and replaces them with 'Bureau Chief of the Iowa Laboratory Bureau.'

A couple other changes of note would authorize IDALS emergency rule making authority during a foreign animal disease outbreak and give the Board of Veterinary Medicine the ability to assess up to a \$10,000 administrative penalty for violation of veterinary license provisions and rules.

The bill also includes provisions that provide clear Code language that IDALS has sufficient title to livestock that has been seized under Code chapter 717, to disposed or market livestock abandoned by its owners and to recoup IDALS incurred care and feeding expenses from sale proceeds that were paid for from the Livestock Remediation fund. The two other minor changes to the bill made by the amendment creates both a reference to and definition of compost to list of beneficial substances and adds a proviso to the definition of 'beneficial substance' to explicitly state it does not include a pesticide.

## **IDALS Secretary Naig Announces 33 Choose Iowa Food Purchasing Grants for Schools**

On Thursday, May 29, 2025, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced 33 schools or school districts have received grants to participate in the [Choose Iowa Food Purchasing Program for Schools](#). The one-year pilot program connects Iowa schools with [Choose Iowa members](#) to encourage school food service programs to purchase and serve more ingredients and products sourced from local farmers and small businesses. The pilot program was authorized during the 2024 legislative session and is an initiative of Choose Iowa, the state's branding and marketing program that identifies and promotes Iowa grown, made, and raised food, beverages and ag products. IDALS Secretary Naig noted--“This Choose Iowa pilot program is yet another way we’re connecting Iowa farmers and small businesses with schools to provide fresh, local, and nutritious food to our students. This one-year pilot program saw strong demand from interested schools that far exceeded the available program budget. As Choose Iowa continues to expand, we will work to open even more opportunities to connect local producers and school food programs. Choose Iowa’s membership is growing quickly and is already demonstrating how it can be a powerful tool for strengthening and growing our rural communities.”

The school pilot program has a total budget of \$70,000, and each school was eligible to apply for up to \$1,000 per school building. Both public and private schools were encouraged to apply. Selected schools are required to provide a minimum one-to-one (1:1) financial match. For example, a school receiving \$1,000 must provide at

least \$1,000 from other sources for a total of \$2,000 spent on local foods through the pilot program. Choose Iowa received applications from 61 schools or school districts totaling \$158,249, an overall request far exceeding available funding.

The following schools, listed in alphabetical order by county of location, received grants:

Appanoose: Moulton-Udell Community School District

Benton: Belle Plaine Community School District

Black Hawk: Bosco Catholic School System

Boone: Boone Community School District

Cass: Griswold Community School District

Clayton: MFL MarMac Community School District

Dallas: Waukee Community School District

Dubuque: Holy Family Catholic Schools

Franklin: Hampton-Dumont Community School District

Grundy: Dike-New Hartford Community School District

Hamilton: Webster City School District

Harrison: Missouri Valley Community School District

Howard: Riceville Community School District

Ida: OABCIG Community School District

Jefferson: Fairfield Community School District

Johnson: Lone Tree Community School District

Lee: Central Lee Community School District

Linn: Center Point-Urbana Community School District

Linn: Xavier Catholic Schools

Marion: Pella Community School District

Mitchell: Osage Community School District

O'Brien: Sheldon Community School District

Page: Clarinda Community School District

Plymouth: Hinton Community School District

Polk: Bondurant-Farrar Community School District

Pottawattamie: Council Bluffs Community School District

Poweshiek: Montezuma Community School District

Ringgold: Diagonal Community School District

Scott: Pleasant Valley Community School District

Sioux: West Sioux Community School District

Winneshiek: Decorah Community School District

Winneshiek: St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School

Woodbury: Westwood Community School District

Eligible products that can be purchased include meat and poultry, dairy products (other than milk), eggs, honey and produce. Funding for milk is available through a different federal program. To be eligible for funding through the Choose Iowa Food Purchasing Pilot Program, schools must purchase food from a [Choose Iowa member](#). If selected schools wish to purchase from specific Iowa farmers, they should encourage those farmers or businesses to apply to become a [Choose Iowa member](#). Food hubs that are Choose Iowa members are also eligible for food purchases within the program. Products purchased through food hubs must come from Iowa producers. Additional details on the school pilot program can be found on the [Choose Iowa website](#). The school program accompanies the IDALS' [Choose Iowa's Food Purchasing Pilot Program for Food Banks](#), which launched last summer to connect food banks with Choose Iowa members to help alleviate hunger within our communities.

*(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)*

## Commerce

### What is Travel Insurance?

The following was provided by the Iowa Insurance Division Consumer Advocacy Officer: [Travel insurance](#) safeguards your investment in a costly trip by covering unexpected events that could disrupt your plans. It can reimburse pre-paid, non-refundable expenses for unforeseen circumstances. Consider purchasing a policy if there is a chance the trip could be impacted by severe weather, a loved one has a pre-existing health condition, or non-refundable expenses have already been incurred. Before purchasing a policy, understand the different coverage options, exclusions, and limitations, as policies vary significantly. Check current insurance policies and credit card protections for coverage already provided.

Travel interruption or cancellation coverage may reimburse for non-refundable costs like flights, hotels, and tours if you have to cancel or cut a trip short due to covered reasons such as illness, injury, or unexpected severe weather. Cancel for any reason policies are more expensive and may only reimburse for a portion of the travel loss. Regular health insurance may not cover medical expenses incurred abroad. Travel insurance may cover doctor visits, hospital stays, emergency medical transportation, and transportation home for treatment. If traveling to a remote area or participating in adventure activities, ensure the policy offers adequate coverage for medical evacuation and specialized activities. Many policies have exclusions or limitations for pre-existing medical conditions. If needed, consider a policy with a pre-existing condition waiver.

Review coverage for flight delays and missed connections which may result in extra expenses for meals, accommodations, and transportation.

Lost or delayed baggage coverage may cover lost, stolen, or damaged luggage and personal belongings, and help you replace lost property.

A policy may also provide travel assistance for problems such as rebooking flights, lost passports, or finding medical facilities. There may also be legal assistance in case of an accident or other incident.

When purchasing a policy, compare quotes from multiple [licensed providers](#) to find a policy that fits your budget and offers the coverage needed. On average a policy costs [between 4-8% of the trip's price](#). The expense for the policy is based on the traveler's age, the destination and length of the trip, the coverage limits for medical expenses and baggage, and the covered reasons for the trip cancellation/interruption. Purchase travel insurance soon after booking your trip to maximize coverage, especially for trip cancellation benefits. Many tour companies can recommend a travel insurance policy. Shorter trips closer to home do not need travel insurance.

If you need to file a claim under a travel insurance policy, do so as soon as possible and provide all required documentation to support your claim. Call the [Iowa Insurance Division](#) with concerns regarding your travel insurance policy at 877-955-1212.

If you can't afford to cancel and rebook your trip, consider travel insurance. Before purchasing, carefully review the fine print, compare quotes, and choose coverage that suits your individual travel needs and budget. The best thing about travel insurance is the peace of mind. Knowing you're protected against various travel mishaps allows you to relax and enjoy your trip without worrying about potential financial losses.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

## Economic Growth

### Register Now for IEDA's "Revitalize Your Downtown" Forum

Register now for a Downtown Forum near you! Join IEDA to explore 10 powerful ways to strengthen a community's commercial district. Each session is led by the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Downtown Resource Center team. Learn from real success stories across Iowa and get hands-on experience during a special exercise tailored to the host community's downtown.

What's included:

- 10 focused segments (five in the morning, five in the afternoon)
- A practical activity to apply knowledge
- Great networking with other passionate changemakers

Cost: Free. Just be sure to register — refreshments are provided. Register at:  
<https://opportunityiowa.gov/community/downtown-resource-center>

Choose your date and location:

June 18 — Panora

June 19 — Spencer

June 25 — Hampton

June 26 — Oskaloosa

All workshops are scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss 2-5290)

## Education

### Key Education Bills Signed by Governor

On Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, Governor Kim Reynolds signed the below education bills into law. Of note, ensuring that nonpublic students are able to participate in athletics at public schools in specific circumstances and incorporating pregnancy and fetal development instruction in grades 5-12. The political left worked extremely hard to defeat the fetal development bill because it shows the humanity of a baby while still in the mother's womb while relying on basic biological science.

**HF 189:** A bill for an act relating to the eligibility of students enrolled in nonpublic schools to compete in extracurricular interscholastic athletic contests or competitions provided by public schools, and including effective date provisions.

**HF 395:** A bill for an act relating to approved courses of instruction for school bus drivers, and including effective date provisions.

**HF 787:** A bill for an act relating to education, including by modifying provisions related to the calculation of the teacher salary supplement district cost per pupil, teacher preparation requirements, out-of-state placement of certain specified students requiring special education, the duties of the Department of Education, and minimum teacher salaries, and including effective date provisions.

**HF 870:** A bill for an act relating to students who attend a course in religious instruction that is provided by a private organization, including by modifying provisions related to compulsory education and chronic absenteeism.

**HF 890:** A bill for an act relating to education, including by modifying provisions related to community college and Department of Education reporting requirements, the National Board Certification Pilot Project, employees of the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Program or the Iowa School for the Deaf, and the employment contracts between community colleges and community college instructors, and including effective date provisions.

**SF 175:** A bill for an act incorporating provisions related to pregnancy and fetal development into the human growth and development and health curricula provided by school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to students enrolled in grades five through twelve.

**SF 288:** A bill for an act relating to students who are pregnant or who recently gave birth who attend state institutions of higher education governed by the Board of Regents and community colleges.

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

## Environmental Protection

### **EPA Proposes Repeal of Biden-Harris EPA Regulations for Power Plants, Could Save Americans More than a Billion Dollars a Year**

On Wednesday, June 11, 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a press release announcing that this federal agency has proposed two significant changes to the nation's air quality programs that are important step towards ensuring affordable, dependable energy for American families and restore American energy dominance. EPA is proposing to repeal all "greenhouse gas" emissions standards for the power sector under Section 111 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and to repeal amendments to the 2024 Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) that directly result in coal-fired power plants having to shut down. These Biden-era regulations have imposed massive costs on coal-, oil-, and gas-fired power plants, raising the cost of living for American families, imperiling the reliability of our electric grid, and limiting American energy prosperity. EPA Administrator Zeldin commented-- *"Affordable, reliable electricity is key to the American dream and a natural byproduct of national energy dominance. According to many, the primary purpose of these Biden-Harris administration regulations was to destroy industries that didn't align with their narrow-minded climate change zealotry. Together, these rules have been criticized as being designed to regulate coal, oil and gas out of existence."*

Ensuring affordable and reliable energy supplies drives down the costs of transportation, heating, utilities, farming, and manufacturing while boosting our national security. Coal and natural gas power plants are essential sources of baseload power that are needed to fuel manufacturing and turn the United States into the Artificial Intelligence capital of the world. The proposed repeals would remove regulatory barriers that limit access to our Nation's energy resources and unleash America's true potential.

#### *Proposal to repeal Obama and Biden Administrations' regulations on power plants*

EPA is proposing to repeal the 2015 emissions standards for new fossil fuel-fired power plants issued during the Obama-Biden Administration, and the 2024 rule for new and existing fossil fuel-fired power plants issued during the Biden-Harris Administration. The first Clean Power Plan was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2022. Many have



voiced concerns that the last administration's replacement for that rule is similarly overreaching and an attempt to shut down affordable and reliable electricity generation in the United States, raising prices for American families, and increasing the country's reliance on foreign-made energy.

In *West Virginia v. EPA*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the major questions doctrine barred EPA from misusing the Clean Air Act to manipulate Americans' energy choices and shift the balance of the nation's electrical fuel mix. The Biden Administration issued its own rule in 2024, which many critics say is just another attempt to achieve the unlawful fuel-shifting goals of the Clean Power Plan.

Unlike other air pollutants with a regional or local impact, the targeted emissions are global in nature. As a result, any potential public health harms have not been accurately attributed to emissions from the U.S. power sector. In light of this, EPA is proposing that the CAA requires the agency to make a finding that the targeted emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants significantly contribute to dangerous air pollution before regulating these emissions from this source category. In addition, EPA is proposing that greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants do not contribute significantly to dangerous air pollution within the meaning of the statute.

As an alternative, EPA is proposing to repeal the most burdensome set of requirements issued for new and existing fossil fuel-fired steam generating units—specifically, the emission guidelines for existing power plants, and carbon capture and sequestration/storage-based requirements for new combustion turbines and modified coal plants. As part of this alternative proposal, EPA is taking comment on the efficiency-based requirements for new natural gas power plant requirements. Based on EPA's estimates, this proposal would save the power sector \$19 billion in regulatory costs over two decades beginning in 2026, or about \$1.2 billion a year.

Read more about this action in the [Greenhouse Gas Standards and Guidelines for Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants Rule Proposal](#).

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

## Health and Human Services

### Governor Signs Work Requirements for Medicaid Expansion Population

This April, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services announced that it will seek federal approval to implement work requirements for the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan following two public hearings. DHHS said that they have a target date of January 1, 2026 to implement the requirements in the state. Information on this process can be found here: <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid/iowa-medicaid-programs/iowa-health-and-wellness-plan/ihawp-member-work-requirements>.

Additionally, the Governor recently signed Senate File 615, which requires the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services to request federal approval to include work requirements as a condition of maintaining eligibility for Medicaid expansion in Iowa. This program will reduce the dependence of low-income Iowans on public assistance and will help these same Iowans move up the economic ladder and towards self-sufficiency. Even though the Governor had authority to do this on her own, the legislation ensures that this common-sense program continues under different state and federal administrations.

**This bill ensures that able-bodied adults are working.** According to the Department of Health and Human Services, over 100,000 Iowans on Medicaid expansion are not working.

Medicaid expansion has only existed in Iowa for 10 years. This program is a safety net for low-income Iowans but is not intended to be a forever government dependent program. This bill intentionally gives DHHS flexibility to implement the program on an individualized basis, looking at the needs and abilities of everyone that has sought out assistance. To be clear, this bill does not affect disabled Iowans on Medicaid. It only affects those on the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan, which is known as Medicaid Expansion and was created in the Obamacare bill.

There is dignity in work. Not only from the financial stability it provides, but the sense of purpose, the skills you learn from completing a job, being responsible for more than yourself, creating good life habits of being on time and acting professionally and respectfully to all while providing a good example to your children. Also, our society has mostly tied health insurance with employment, and this bill builds on that to ensure Iowans are prepared for life after government assistance.

*(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)*

## Judiciary

### Private Property Rights Veto Won't Deter House Republicans

On Wednesday, Governor Reynolds vetoed House File 639, an act relating to hazardous liquid pipelines and eminent domain. House Republicans have continually championed private property rights for all Iowans. Multiple years of hard work, determination and hope were dashed with the veto.

Year after year, House Republicans have sent bills to the Senate in an effort to protect private property. Unfortunately, the Senate wouldn't give these bills a fair hearing. In 2025, House Republicans worked with landowners and crafted HF 639 to protect land, limit for profit companies from taking land, and fix massive problems with the Iowa Utilities Commission. It passed the House with overwhelming bi-partisan support (85-10) and was sent to the Senate. The response to HF 639 was overwhelmingly positive. The bill eventually passed in the Senate with bi-partisan support and was sent to the Governor. Unfortunately, even with strong public support, the Governor vetoed the bill siding with big business over landowners.

House File 639 protected landowners from the impacts of hazardous liquid pipelines. It required pipeline companies to prove they were serving the public interest before they could operate, ensure landowners could voice their concerns in Iowa Utility Commission meetings, and mandated that companies have insurance to cover any damages caused by the pipelines. Additionally, it prevented companies from taking land without *extremely* good reasons and limited how long they can operate their pipelines, helping to safeguard the rights and property of those affected.

Despite the veto, Speaker Grassley has made it clear that protecting private property rights is essential.

"Iowa House Republicans believe landowner rights are a fundamental right in Iowa. With the Governor's veto of House File 639, I have sent a request to all members to sign a petition to reconvene the legislature in a special session to override the Governor's veto.

This veto is a major setback for property rights in Iowa. It is a setback not only for landowners who have been fighting across Iowa, but for the work the House of Representatives has put in for four years to get legislation like HF 639 passed. We will not stop fighting and stand firm on our commitment until landowners in Iowa are protected against Eminent Domain for private gain."

House Republicans are working to override the Governor's veto, but the Senate must agree to protect private property rights for the override to be successful.

*(Contact: Amanda Wille 1-5230)*



### New Unemployment System Now Live on Iowaworks.gov

Iowa's new unemployment system is now live on [iowaworks.gov](https://iowaworks.gov), creating for the first time one centralized location for filing a claim, participating in reemployment activities, and ultimately finding new employment.

In addition to the job and recruitment tools that were previously available, claimants and employers can now use [iowaworks.gov](https://iowaworks.gov) for all actions within the unemployment process. The new and modernized system replaces a previous system used for over half a century that required multiple websites and accounts to file for unemployment. IWD has experienced a higher than normal volume of calls to its helpline, so claimants seeking assistance may experience longer wait times. However, IWD estimates that over 3,500 Iowans had successfully filed a claim in the new system as of noon on Tuesday.

In the weeks before launch, IWD provided resources to claimants and employers to prepare them for the new system, and many Iowans were able to file their regular claims last week before the beginning of a brief system downtime. However, any claimants who were unable to file before the downtime now can retroactively file a claim in the new system.

With this once-in-a-generation change, IWD expects that there to be a transition period as more and more Iowans become used to the new process. However, the agency is confident that the new system in IowaWORKS creates a much-improved experience that will result in better workforce outcomes.

Resources, instructions, and support options are below.

- [Instructions: Accessing the New Unemployment System in IowaWORKS](#)
- [Project Overview: UI Modernization](#)
- [Support: Unemployment Customer Service](#) (Contact Information is also below.)

#### Benefits Support (Questions about Unemployment Claims)

- Phone: [1-866-239-0843](tel:1-866-239-0843)
- Email: [uiclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:uiclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov)
- Hours: Monday-Friday; 8:00am – 4:30 pm (except state holidays)

#### Tax Support (Questions about Employer UI Tax Account)

- Phone: [888-848-7442](tel:888-848-7442)
- Email: [iwduitax@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:iwduitax@iwd.iowa.gov)
- Hours: Monday-Friday; 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (except state holidays)

#### Enhanced Security in IowaWORKS

The consolidation of services on iowaworks.gov also means that enhanced security measures will be added to protect claimant and business information. All users of iowaworks.gov now will be required to use multi-factor authentication when logging into the website (verifying through a text message or email). For instructions, visit [Using Multi-Factor Authentication on IowaWORKS](#).

*(Info from Iowa Workforce Development)*

*(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)*

## Local Government

### Disaster Recovery Bill Key Accomplishment for Local Government Committee

With the 2025 Legislative session concluded, the Local Government Committee reported 25 bills out of the Committee for full consideration of the House of Representatives. Of those bills, 10 have been signed into law by Governor Reynolds. These bills cover a range of topics including disaster relief, providing protection for property owner rights, and civil service reform.

Governor Reynolds signed into law [Senate File 619](#) which enhances and improves Iowan's recovery efforts for communities affected by natural disasters. This comprehensive legislation encompasses several important programs and regulatory changes that will benefit homeowners, renters, and the broader community. The bill establishes the Natural Hazard Mitigation Financing Program, expands the Disaster Recovery Housing Assistance Program, and provides consumer protection regulations for post-lost assignment of benefits for those effected by natural disasters limiting the amount adjusters are allowed to collect and providing regulation for how adjusters, contractors, and appraisers are to conduct business.

[House File 645](#) provides essential protections for racetracks across Iowa to help ensure their continued success and growth. House File 645 establishes that racing facilities and racetracks will not be subject to nuisance claims from property owners who move into the area after the facility has been established. With the new protections in place, local racing facilities can focus on hosting races and events for fans and families. This stability will allow for better planning, investment in improvements, and the ability to attract more events. Racing facilities are not just places for competition; they are economic engines for our communities. They create jobs, support local businesses, and draw visitors from near and far. By safeguarding these venues, we are also safeguarding the economic benefits they bring to local communities.

[House File 297](#) clarifies Iowa Code that a city council member may be appointed the Chief of volunteer fire fighters or another appointed officer position with a majority vote of the city council. The council member must abstain from their appointment vote. The new law also creates an optional reserve savings fund for cities to make purchases or large maintenance on equipment for police, fire, rescue, or emergency medical services. Funds would be allowed to carry over fiscal year. These optional reserve funds provide local governments another tool to make larger necessary purchases such as fire engines or new law enforcement vehicles.

*(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)*

## Natural Resources

### Governor Signs Two Natural Resources Bills (SF 253, and SF 593)

On Thursday, June 5, 2025, Iowa Governor Reynolds signed and enacted two pieces of natural resource legislation that passed this past session (Senate File 253 and Senate File 593). SF 253 includes provisions for issuing a lifetime fur harvester license to residents of Iowa who are disabled veterans or were prisoners of war during their military service. The bill specifies that these veterans can obtain the license upon payment of a fee established by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Furthermore, the DNR is tasked with preparing an application for this license, while the Department of Veterans Affairs will assist in verifying the applicants' status. SF 253 passed the House by a unanimous 90-aye vote on May 12, 2025, and passed the Senate on March 11, 2026, by a unanimous 47-aye vote.

SF 593 creates a requirement for county auditors to create and file a district parcel record with the county recorder upon receiving relevant survey documents. This record must detail all parcels within a drainage or levee district, including legal descriptions, parcel identification numbers, and owner names. Auditors who have not filed such records before the act's effective date must do so by June 30, 2026. The measure include a provision added by the House that County auditors may not charge a fee for this action. SF 593 passed the House on May 12, 2025, by a unanimous 89-aye vote, and passed the Senate by two unanimous votes 49-aye on March 24, 2025, and 45-aye on May 14, 2025.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

## Public Safety

### All Public Safety Bills Signed by Governor

With less than a week left for the Governor to sign bills from this legislative session, the House Public Safety Committee can report that all 12 bills sent to the Governor's desk have been signed. Below are short summaries of those bills.

HOUSE FILE 180-GROOMING -Individuals convicted of grooming must register as a sex offender.

HOUSE FILE 181- THC OPEN CONTAINER - Prohibits drivers and passengers from having open containers of beverages containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in the vehicle.

HOUSE FILE 182-CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES- The bill updates Iowa's controlled substances schedules to align with federal regulations.

HOUSE FILE 249- IMPROPER BENEFITS- RECOVERY – Allows the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing to collect payments inappropriately obtained from the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

HOUSE FILE 549- LAW ENFORCEMENT INVOLVED SHOOTING INVESTIGATION- Requires County Attorneys review officer-involved shootings and provide a written opinion in a reasonable amount of time. If there is a conflict of interest the case must be referred to outside counsel.

HOUSE FILE 793-FIREFIGHTER REQUIREMENTS- Prohibits individuals on the sex offender registry from being fire fighters.

HOUSE FILE 901- VETERANS TRANSFER INTO LAW ENFORCEMENT -Allows military veterans with military police experience, and former federal law enforcement officers to become peace officers in Iowa by taking shorter, Iowa based, training course.

HOUSE FILE 1002-FIREFIGHTERS SERVICE AWARD-Establishes a length of service award program for volunteer fire fighters, volunteer emergency medical care providers, and reserve peace officers in Iowa municipalities.

SENATE FILE 106-CONVEYANCE FIREARM- Allows the carrying of carry loaded firearms on snowmobiles and ATVs without a permit. It also eliminates fines for carrying firearms in vehicles.

SENATE FILE 296- EMT TREATING POLICE DOGS-Permits emergency medical care providers to diagnose and treat severely injured police service dogs under specific conditions.

SENATE FILE 303 – FIREWORKS-Prohibits local governments from restricting the use of consumer fireworks on July 3 and 4, and December 31.

SENATE FILE 397- ASSAULT AGAINST CERTAIN PROFESSIONS- Increases penalties for assaults against peace officers, correctional staff, juvenile detention staff, health care providers and firefighters. The bill also includes provisions for assaults that result in contact with bodily fluids, such as saliva, and establishes a minimum seven-day sentence for certain offenses.

*Contact: Amanda Wille 1-5230)*

## State Government

### Governor Signs Open Meeting Enforcement Enhancement

This week Governor Reynold signed [House File 706](#), a new law that will increase public officials' training of open meeting and public information and increase enforcement of violations. HF 706 requires newly elected or appointed officials to complete an Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB) provided or approved course of training on their responsibilities of open meeting and public information laws. Too often when cases come before IPIB the defense given is that the official or government body wasn't aware of their legal requirements. The new law will proactively provide that information to elected officials at the beginning of their tenure.

In addition to the training, the new law increases fines for violations of these laws. The current fines in Iowa Code have not seen an increase since 2005. By increasing the fines, the law will have more teeth to enforce Iowa's open meetings and public records laws. IPIB exists as an alternative means to secure compliance with open meeting and open records laws and their complaint process will remain the same which allows the board an initial determination of the merit of a complaint, which includes dismissal for "harmless error", and informal assistance process to work with the parties to reach an informal and quick resolution.

This new law will continue to provide the tools necessary to hold government officials to provide transparency and accountability to Iowans. It is vitally important that Iowans are able to trust in their governmental processes and having public meetings and open records available ensures that Iowans are aware of how their governments are functioning.

*(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)*

## Transportation

### State Transportation Commission Approves 2026-2030 Construction Plan

The new five-year plan for road construction and other improvements to Iowa's transportation system was approved Tuesday morning by the state Transportation Commission. While meeting in West Des Moines, the Commission gave the green light to the FY 2026-2030 plan which expects to spend \$4.3 billion in state and federal funding for various projects over those five years.

Each spring, the Transportation Commission and the Department of Transportation put together the plan for investing state and federal funding into Iowa's roads, highways, airports, railroads, trails and public transit systems. The document, known as the Iowa Transportation Improvement Program, is approved by the Commission each summer as the roadmap for work to be done in the upcoming fiscal year and beyond.

The largest portion of the program deals with specific highway and bridge projects anticipated to be constructed over the next five years on the state highway system. This is made up of all Interstate, U.S., and Iowa-signed routes. All other roads in the state are under the jurisdiction of individual cities and counties and each local jurisdiction develops its own program of highway, road, street, and bridge construction projects.

The highway and bridge projects included in this program would cost approximately \$3.8 billion of state and federal funding expected to be available over the next five years. As it has been doing for a number of years, the DOT and the Transportation Commission have prioritized projects that improve the safety and condition of existing state highways and bridges.

Significant investments in bridges have been made since 2006, when 256 bridges on the state highway system were identified as being in poor condition. Since then, the state has reduced the number of poor-condition bridges down to 26. As part of the new five-year plan, more than \$1.6 billion will be committed towards additional bridge investments. This is larger allocation for bridge work than was approved last year, as a number of state-owned bridges are nearing the point of needing repairs or renovation in the next few years.

The headline road construction projects included in the plan are always those involving the state's interstate highways. Over the next five years these projects include continued work replacing Interstate 80's bridge over the Mississippi River, completing the redo of the east mixmaster between Des Moines and Ankeny and renovating the west mixmaster in West Des Moines, widening Interstate 35 to six lanes between Ankeny and Ames, and widening Interstate 380 between North Liberty and Cedar Rapids. One new major project added to the plan for the later years is bridge replacement and widening of the intersection of Interstate 35 and Highway 30 around Ames. Providing more parking space for semis at Iowa's rest stops is also a priority, with 45 additional spots created under the plan.

The plan is posted on the Iowa DOT's website and lists out all the road construction projects planned for each county. It can be found at: <https://iowadot.gov/media/844/download?inline=>

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

## Veterans Affairs

### Legislature Supports Veterans in 2025 Legislative Session

This session, the legislature had the following bills signed by the Governor to help Iowa's veterans:

- **County Commissions of Veterans Affairs** - HF250 comes from the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs to update a legislative report to be based on the fiscal year, rather than calendar year, and to provide oversight over the training of county executive directors and administrators by the commandant of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **Disabled Veteran Hunting** - HF885 allows disabled veterans able to receive one any sex deer hunting license during any firearm deer hunting season using the method of take allowed during that season. This bill also increases the number of nonresident wild turkey hunting licenses for those that served in the military and are disabled from 25 to 75.
- **Modification of National Guard Service Scholarship Program** – HF118 modifies the national guard service scholarship program in Iowa. It establishes that scholarship awards cannot exceed the difference between the tuition rate at the institution attended by the national guard member and any financial aid received under specified federal programs. The bill also removes the provision that eligibility and scholarship determinations cannot be based on a national guard member's unit or drill location.
- **National Guard Service Professional Qualification Scholarship Program** – HF117 creates the National Guard Service Professional Qualification Scholarship Program, administered by the college student aid commission. This program is designed for Iowa National Guard members who are enrolled in educational programs leading to approved credentials. Eligible individuals must be residents of Iowa, have completed initial active-duty training, and maintain satisfactory academic progress. The scholarship awards will cover the total cost of the educational program, and the adjutant general will certify eligibility and award amounts. The bill also allows for the carryover of unspent funds to the next fiscal year for this purpose.

- **Veterans Transfer into Law Enforcement** – HF901 allows military veterans with military police experience and former federal law enforcement officers to become certified law enforcement officers in Iowa without completing the usual training program. To qualify, veterans must have served at least four years and have recent military police training, while former federal officers must have four years of service and equivalent training. They need to submit proof of their service and training. The law enforcement council will review applications and can approve candidates for a special program or suggest other training if needed. The council will also publish an annual report on the number of certified veterans and federal.
- **Lifetime Fur Harvester License for Disabled Veterans** – SF253 proposes to include provisions for issuing a lifetime fur harvester license to residents of Iowa who are disabled veterans or were prisoners of war during their military service. The bill specifies that these veterans can obtain the license upon payment of a fee established by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Furthermore, the DNR is tasked with preparing an application for this license, while the Department of Veterans Affairs will assist in verifying the applicants' status.

*(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)*

## Ways & Means

### Senate File 657—Economic Development Tax Credit Modernization

This article focuses on Divisions III, IV, and V of Senate File 657—covering the elimination of the old High Quality Jobs Program and replacing it with the Business Incentives for Growth “BIG” program.

#### **Division III—Business Incentives for Growth Program**

This division authorizes the establishment of one or more funds within the state treasury, under the control of IEDA, to be used for the “BIG” program. A business eligible for the BIG program must meet all of the following requirements:

- The community must approve via ordinance or resolution.
- It must be primarily engaged in advanced manufacturing, bioscience, insurance and finance, or technology and innovation. It must not be a data center, retail business, etc.
- Cannot be simply relocating from one area in the state to another.
- Must provide benefits to employees.
- Must not have a record of violations of law.

Applications for the BIG program are submitted to IEDA. For a proposed project that will result in elevated water consumption by the business, the application must be accompanied by a water conservation and waste reduction plan. The terms of, and aggregate value of, a tax incentive may be negotiated between an eligible business and IEDA, but the aggregate value of the tax incentives that any one eligible business may receive shall not exceed 5 percent of the eligible business's qualifying investment. IEDA may authorize any combination of tax incentives available for an eligible business. If the eligible business is in a rural county—the maximum aggregate shall not exceed 7.5 percent.

If a business is issued a tax incentive under the BIG program they are entitled to a refund of certain sales and use taxes, after filing a claim with the department of revenue. An eligible business may not receive a tax credit certificate until the eligible business's project, or a portion of the project, has been placed in service. The department of revenue shall remit the tax credit to the eligible business over five tax years. If within five years of the date the authority issues an eligible business a tax credit, the eligible business sells, disposes of, etc all or a part of the land, buildings, or other structures for which the tax credit was claimed, the tax liability of the eligible business for that year shall be increased by the amounts detailed.

A community in which an eligible business's project is located may grant the eligible business a property tax exemption for a portion of the actual value added by improvements to real property through the project for a period not to exceed 10 years beginning the year that the improvements to real property are first assessed for taxation.

**Divisions IV and V—Elimination of the High Quality Jobs Program & Conforming Changes**

Because of the creation of the BIG program, these divisions repeal the high quality jobs program. They do provide fulfillment of agreements entered into on or before December 1, 2025.

The next Ways & Means newsletter article will be on the new Seed Investor Tax Credit Program and the elimination of the Investments in Qualifying Business Tax Credit Program.

*(Contact: Kristi Kiious 2-5290)*