



State Employees Association of North Carolina • www.seanc.org

# LEGISLATIVE *Update*

April 2, 2015

## **Gas tax bill passes General Assembly without DOT layoffs** ***Some lawmakers still want outsourcing of jobs in current budget***

[The House and Senate approved a compromise gas tax bill this week](#), sending it to Gov. Pat McCrory's desk for his signature. Unlike the original proposal, this bill contains no layoffs from the Department of Transportation, though it will eliminate 40 empty positions.

The original language passed by the Senate would have eliminated 500 jobs in areas of road maintenance, such as pavement preservation, winter weather treatments, roadside environmental activity and preconstruction. But thanks to the efforts of SEANC lobbyists and members, as well as opposition from McCrory, Transportation Secretary Tony Tata and Speaker Pro Tem Rep. Paul Stam (R-Wake), who introduced an amendment in the House Finance Committee removing these layoffs, these positions are now secure.

However, according to the News & Observer's N.C. Insider, [a new Senate bill filed Monday](#) is calling for DOT to follow a mandate in the current budget year to make 81 job cuts by May by eliminating filled, full-time jobs that it can outsource – such as those in road maintenance. This bill is currently in the Senate's Rules and Operations Committee.

Additionally, [a Senate bill filed last week](#) is still looking at the privatization of the DOT's ferry services – a vital public service for those living, working and visiting along the coast and Outer Banks that carries 2.2 million passengers and 1 million vehicles every year. This bill is currently in the Senate Transportation Committee.

SEANC lobbyists are working to prevent the privatization of DOT jobs but we need your help. Now is the time for members – especially those working for DOT – to [contact their legislators](#) and explain to them that these vital public services are best performed by state employees.

“Vital public services should be performed by public employees,” SEANC Executive Director Mitch Leonard said. “State employees, who answer to the public, can provide these services better and more efficiently than employees from a private business who answer only to profit-maximizing shareholders.”

## **SEANC monitoring retiree health plan bill**

[A bill to allow state retirees returning to work for the state on a temporary basis to receive health plan benefits](#) is now in the House State Personnel Committee.

The bill, which passed the Senate, would put state retirees who return to work for 30 or more hours per week on a nonpermanent basis in the active employee State Health Plan coverage, and would require state agencies to make the same employer contributions.

## **SEANC still monitoring budget discussions**

The second round in the creation of the state spending plan is still ongoing as House budget writers meet quietly as they await the April 15 tax revenue report.

In the meantime, SEANC lobbyists and members are urging lawmakers to improve upon Gov. Pat McCrory's proposal, which offers only targeted raises to certain employee groups – not a much-needed meaningful across-the-board increase.

After all, while highway patrol troopers and corrections officers certainly have dangerous jobs, so do DHHS, [DOT employees](#) and many others. And while there are certainly jobs that are hard to fill, all state agencies are suffering from a lack of ability to recruit and retain employees, which actually ends up costing the state more than it would to simply give a meaningful across-the-board raise.

SEANC lobbyists and members also are urging lawmakers to include a meaningful retiree cost-of-living adjustment in their budget proposals, which the governor did not.

## **Contact your legislators**

Now it is the time for you to [contact your lawmakers](#). Make your voice heard on the need for all state employees to receive a pay raise and all retirees to receive a cost-of-living increase. We need all hands on deck. Help your legislators put a face to state employees, SEANC and their constituents.

Not sure who your legislators are? [Click here](#). Curious whether they were endorsed by EMPAC? [Click here](#). Want to make note of all of SEANC's legislative priorities before talking to them? [Click here](#).

SEANC staff can also help you schedule meetings with your lawmakers and make sure you have the most up-to-date information possible about SEANC's legislative priorities, so you can have a good and productive conversation. All you have to do is let us know you're coming. Just email [tbooe@seanc.org](mailto:tbooe@seanc.org) or call 800-222-2758 or 919-810-0272.

Can't make it to Raleigh? No problem. You can call, write or email your legislators – or even schedule your own time to meet with them in your hometown. Again, you can find your lawmakers and their contact information [here](#).