



NORTH CAROLINA GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JANUARY 26, 2007



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INTRODUCTION

The 2007 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly convened at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, January 24th. This is the 148th session of the State Legislature with the General Assembly meeting in Raleigh since 1794. It was a day filled with family and friends as guests were invited to sit on the floor of both the House and the Senate to watch the members be sworn into office. It is a day much like the first day of school when everyone is hopeful and excited about the possibilities that the session might bring.

On the House side, there was surprisingly little intrigue in the election for Speaker, as Representative Joe Hackney won the vote by a 68-52 margin along party lines. This is the first time in many years that there has not been intrigue during the first day regarding who would be the Speaker. Other officers are: Speaker Pro Tempore, Representative William Wainwright; House Majority Leader, Representative Hugh Hollimon; and Minority Leader, Representative Paul Stam. In the House this session, there are 68 Democrats and 52 Republicans, 17 new members, and 1 returning member. There are also 36 women, 20 African-Americans, 1 Native American, and 1 Hispanic.

On the Senate side, Senator Marc Basnight was elected to a record breaking eighth consecutive session as President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Senator Charlie Dannelly was elected Deputy President Pro Tempore, the Majority Leader is Senator Tony Rand, and the Minority Leader is Senator Phil Berger. The Senate has four new members, 1 former senator and a former House member. There are 8 female senators and 7 African-Americans.

It will take several weeks for the House to set up its committees and decide on its rules for the session. Speaker Hackney has already announced that all bills filed will be sent to the Rules Committee temporarily until the committees have been established. There will be a lot of jockeying between members to receive plum committee assignments or to serve on committees that are important to their districts. It will be interesting to see if the leadership positions are spread out throughout the Democratic Party or if Speaker Hackney's allies will receive most of the posts. On the Senate side, it is probably going to be business as usual. The committee chairs from last year more than likely will continue in those roles since there was very little turnover in the Senate. The bills filed in the Senate have not been assigned to a committee yet, but we expect them to be assigned as soon as the committees are announced.



BILLS OF INTEREST

HOUSE BILL 24, Smoking in Government Buildings/Prohibition, would prohibit smoking in all buildings owned, leased, or occupied by state government except for areas used for medical or scientific research on smoking. The bill would also require the posting of no smoking signs and directs the Commission for Health Services to adopt rules to enforce the prohibition. Violations would be punishable by a fine of no more than \$25 and would begin after January 1, 2008. **Introduced by Representatives Weiss and Glazier.**

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