

INSIDE

Next Week's Calendar

The Legislature is in session Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday next week.

Legislative News

12 Senate Committee Meetings Announced.

May public hearings.

Updates from the Governor

New Renewable Energy Projects

Transportation Funding Competition

Front Line Worker Grants Open

Agency News

AG: End Predatory Lending

Comptroller: Green Pension Fund Investments

Legislature Returns:

Health Facility Staffing Ratios, Air-borne Infectious Disease Rules among actions - Comptroller Sanctions Investigation

This week was marked by the Legislature's return from their post budget break and the beginning of the final eight weeks of session, Earth Day (Thursday), and yes of course - a spring snowstorm that impacted many regions of the State.

Among the highlights were actions by the legislature related to hospital staffing committees, nursing home staffing ratios, and imposing new requirements for businesses related to infectious airborne disease in the workplace. Efforts to expand vaccination access against COVID-19 continued as hospitalization rates trended downward (details [here](#) and [here](#)); the Governor joined other governors asking Congress to address banking issues for states that have legalized marijuana use; and the NYS Assembly's Governor Cuomo impeachment investigation continued as the Comptroller asked for an investigation into the allegations of Governor's misuse of public resources.

Impeachment investigation - The Assembly Judiciary Chair provided an [update](#) on the status of the investigation relating to misconduct allegations against the Governor. To date the committee has received more than 100 tips via hotline and email. The investigation began on March 11.

Comptroller asks AG to investigate misuse of public resources - The NYS Comptroller released to the press on Monday an [April 13 letter](#) to Attorney General Letitia James asking the Office to investigate the alleged use of public resources in "the drafting, editing, sale and promotion of the Governor's book" regarding the State's pandemic response.

Health Facility Staffing ratios - Two bills were introduced Thursday evening related to establishing staffing ratios in hospitals and nursing homes. Bill [S1168a/A108b](#), was amended to require the establishment of clinical staffing committees in hospitals. Bill [S6346/A7119](#), requires the establishment of nursing home staffing levels with statutory standards of hours of care per resident per day. As of Thursday, both bills had been added to the Senate Health Committee agenda. See our "Legislative news" section for link to full committee agendas.

Infectious airborne disease in the workplace - The legislature passed a bill (A2681b/S1034b), modeled on current Department of Health (DOH) guidelines to require employers to adopt protection plans for preventing the spread of airborne disease in the workplace. See our "Legislative news" section for details and a link to the bill.

Taking cannabis to the bank - The Governor joined other governors signing a [letter](#) of support to Congress urging the passage of the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act of 2021 ([HR1996/S910](#)) which, if enacted, would allow banks and credit unions to provide services to state-licensed cannabis-related businesses. Currently financial institutions would face a range of legal risks under the federal Controlled Substances Act if they provided services to cannabis related businesses in the states. Adult use cannabis was legalized in New York on March 31, 2021 (Chapter 92, L. 2021).



From the Governor

Earth Day: 20 Renewable Energy Projects to Start

Coinciding with Earth Day 20 large scale renewable energy projects were [announced](#), creating 2,000 jobs with \$1.5 billion private investment in a step closer to the goal of 70 percent of the State's electricity being sourced from renewable sources by 2030.

\$85 Million Clean Transportation Prizes Initiative

The initiative includes three competitions for innovative solutions to enhance clean energy transportation and mobility options. The competitions include the Clean Neighborhoods Challenge, the Electric Mobility Challenge and the Electric Truck & Bus Challenge, with each run in two phases. [See announcement](#) for details.

Empire Pandemic Grant Applications Open

[Applications](#) are now being accepted for \$26.6 million available to support essential workers and first responders through the [Empire Pandemic Response Reimbursement Fund](#) program. The program, coordinated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, is designed to reimburse out-of-pocket child or dependent care, transportation, lodging and other qualifying expenses that eligible workers incurred while employed in New York State between March 1, 2020, through the date of application submission. Up to \$1,000 is available per household.

Executive Orders

Governor Cuomo issued [EO 202.102](#), which allows restaurants and bars to stay open until midnight, and eliminated civil penalties related to certain vaccine distribution requirements.

Legislative news

2021 Legislative Session Days

There are 3 scheduled session days next week Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. You can find the full 2021 Legislative Session calendar [here](#).

Legislative Committees

There are 12 committee meeting announced for the Senate and none for the Assembly announced yet. If there are more announced, the meetings will be found here: [live stream available on the Senate website](#), with the Assembly [found here once announced](#).

Legislative Activity

The Legislature passed 43 bills this week while in session. Of particular note, [A.2681B \(Reyes\) / S.1034B \(Gianaris\)](#) passed both houses. Modeled on current DOH COVID-19 guidelines, the bill requires employers to adopt protection plans for preventing the spread of airborne disease in the workplace, which will have wide ranging impacts on employers. Failure to adopt the protocol, follow the protocol, or take proper precautions to prevent the spread of the disease would open the employer up to civil fines from the state and lawsuits from employees. The bill has not yet been delivered to the Governor.

Public Hearings

- ~ May 6th, [Senate Standing Committee on Codes](#). Subject: To explore policies surrounding automatic expungement of criminal records and the need for the [NY Clean Slate Act](#).
- ~ May 7th, - [Senate Standing Committees on Transportation and Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions](#). Subject: East Side Access/East Side Tunnel Project Oversight (MTA/Amtrak).
- ~ May 20th, [Senate Standing Committee on Disabilities](#). Subject: Evaluating the State's response to COVID-19 at certain residential facilities.

The full legislative public hearing calendar can be accessed [here](#).



State Agencies

From the NYS Attorney General

Calling on Congress to end Predatory Lending

As part of a bipartisan coalition of 25 attorneys general, [Attorney General James sent a letter to Congress](#), urging the nation's federal leaders to use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to rescind the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's (OCC) true lender rule. The effort follows a [similar letter](#) sent to congressional leaders in February, also asking them to rescind the rule. According to the Attorney General, the true lender rule undermines New York's efforts to prevent predatory lenders from charging high interest rates on loans and bypasses state interest rate caps – or usury laws – already in place.

From the NYS Comptroller

NYS Pension Fund Announces \$400 Million in Sustainable Investments

The New York State Common Retirement Fund (Fund) has committed approximately \$400 million to two funds as part of its Sustainable Investments and Climate Solutions (SICS) Program, State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, trustee of the Fund, [announced](#).