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Legislature Turns to Non-budget Priorities

After being more than a month late for the first time in recent memory, the enacted budget is in the rearview and legislators and staff are now sifting through items left out of final budget bills. The focus now shifts to identifying priorities to address in a truncated end of session.

Typically, the post-budget session consists of a robust agenda focused on local and statewide policy priorities. On the post April 1 session calendar, there were 25 days scheduled to work through those issues. With only 16 legislative session days left (after today) over the next five weeks the two houses will have to fairly quickly determine and work through those priority items. Generally, that will likely mean some long active lists and debate calendars and long hours in the respective chambers as we move toward the final scheduled day of session June 8th.

Priority Items:

While it is unclear what if any high-level issues will be dealt with prior to the end of session, it is likely there will be some discussion around some of the Governor's proposed housing initiatives that were not included in the budget, along with healthcare workforce flexibilities that have been implemented by executive order since 2021, and the legislature may make another run at passing and getting enacted an amended wrongful death bill that had been vetoed by the Governor last year ([A6698/S6636](#)). Consumer packaging issues, climate related proposals, and local government priorities round out the list of potential end of session priorities.



Legislative News

Legislative Activity

The Legislature is scheduled to be in session on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday this week. After today, there are only 16 scheduled session days left on the [2023 session calendar](#). The legislature has already introduced approximately 13,570 bills. Last week, 15 bills passed in the legislature. Of particular note was:

~ [S2084 \(Harckham\)](#) This bill prohibits forensic child custody evaluators who have been terminated for cause from appearing as an expert witness in family court custody and visitation proceedings. This bill has yet to be introduced in the Assembly.

Public Hearings

~ **May 11th**, the Assembly Standing Committees on Banks and on Economic Development, Job Creation and Industry will host a public hearing on "Cannabis Banking in New York State."

~ **May 12th**, the Senate Standing Committees on Education and New York City Education will host a public hearing in NYC to "examine school policies related to discipline and suspension, and to hear from stakeholders about proposed legislation, S.1040 Solutions Not Suspensions Act."

From the Governor

Grants Now Available for Air Quality Monitoring in Disadvantaged Communities

Governor Kathy Hochul [announced](#) \$2.1 million in competitive grant funding is now available to support community-driven projects to improve air quality and help advance the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. According to the Governor's press release, the funding will support community-based not-for-profit organizations working in disadvantaged communities throughout the state that are disproportionately burdened by pollution. The grants will advance local efforts to obtain air quality data tailored to issues identified by community residents.

Executive Orders (EO):

There were no new Executive Orders issued this week.

State Agencies

From the Office of the Attorney General

AG Proposes Regulations on Cryptocurrency Industry

Attorney General Letitia James [announced](#) a legislative proposal to tighten regulations on the cryptocurrency industry to protect investors, consumers, and the broader economy. The multi-billion-dollar industry lacks robust regulations, making it prone to dramatic market fluctuations, and has been used to hide and facilitate criminal conduct and fraud. Attorney General James' program bill would increase transparency, eliminate conflicts of interest, and impose commonsense measures to protect investors, consistent with regulations imposed on other financial services. The bill would require independent public audits of cryptocurrency exchanges and prevent individuals from owning the same companies, such as brokerages and tokens, to stop conflicts of interest. Crypto platforms would also have to require platforms to reimburse customers who are the victims of fraud. The bill would also strengthen the New York State Department of Financial Services' (DFS) regulatory authority of digital assets.

From the Office of the New York State Comptroller

Comptroller: Local Sales Tax Collections Up 7% in First Quarter

Local government sales tax collections in New York state totaled \$5.5 billion in the first quarter of 2023, an increase of 7.1%, or nearly \$369 million, compared to the same three-month period last year, according to a [report released](#) by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

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