



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



January 17, 2025

Update No. 2

Week two flew by as the Legislature officially hit full speed. The first bill deadline passed on Monday, after which no more than five bills may be introduced by each Representative. On Thursday, the 5<sup>th</sup> legislative day, House Majority Leader Lefor announced that thus far Representatives had introduced 434\* bills and resolutions – a new record for the 5<sup>th</sup> legislative day. I include the asterisk because it seems a bit of a Roger Maris home run record: back when the old record of 409 was set in 1995, the 5<sup>th</sup> legislative day was on January 12 – only six calendar days after the first day of legislative session. This year it was nine full days after opening day, giving legislators three extra days to come up with policy ideas. Overall, we currently sit at 737 bills and resolutions introduced as of today. We will see where we sit after next week when the next bill deadline passes on Monday. Asterisked records aside, they really do seem to be cruising through bills faster than they have in recent years. A number of those with similar concepts that were introduced have been withdrawn, the consent calendar has sent a fair number through to the other house already, and committee hearing schedules are coming out faster than they have in several sessions.

On Wednesday, Governor Armstrong presented his executive budget recommendations to the joint House-Senate Appropriations Committee. His proposed total budget of \$19.89 billion outlined a general fund budget of \$6.6 billion and included \$483.4 million for property tax relief and reform, \$464 million in bonding for construction projects, and \$44.3 million for Education Saving Accounts. While Governor Armstrong's proposed budget was slightly larger than the budget proposed by outgoing Governor Burgum last month, it leaves \$230 million in the general fund ending balance and over \$500 million in the Strategic Investment and Improvements Fund, not including any of the SIIF revenue from next biennium. You can read the full details of the Governor's budget address [here](#).

The other major event at the Capitol this week was the hearing for the bill that contains the Governor's property tax reform and relief plan. **HB 1176** was heard by the House Finance and Taxation committee in front of a packed room. The bill's major sponsors – Nathe, Rummel, and Lefor – all testified in support of the bill before Governor Armstrong and Joe Morissette, Director of OMB testified. NDFU, Farm Bureau, and AARP testified in support. The political subdivisions did a linguistic dance that was sort of in support with criticism or neutral but supportive of tax relief. In any case, it was clear this will be the vehicle for whatever final form property tax reform takes this session. Other property tax bills heard later in the week were comparative ghost towns.

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## **UPDATES FROM ICBND'S PRIORITY TRACKING LIST**

Almost all the bills we added to the tracking list this week are already scheduled for hearings next week, including a packed day on Wednesday. **HB 1378**, a notable addition that would require lenders to pay interest on escrow accounts, is up early Monday morning. Wednesday includes hearings on **HB 1447** (the crypto kiosk bill – ICBND supports), **HB 1183** (track), and **HB 1239** (track). **HB 1441** is also scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. This bill defines gold and silver bullion as specie legal tender and adds legal tender to the definition of money in North Dakota Century Code, which then essentially results in requiring banks or anyone who accepts money to also accept gold and silver bullion. ICBND will oppose the bill. In addition to working on those bills and others listed below, we'll continue to track some of the bills and issues that were heard this week, like:

### **HB 1127**

HB 1127 was heard on Tuesday before the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee. The bulk of the bill would create a data security program for non-bank financial institutions, but it also includes a provision that would allow the DFI commissioner to permanently remove a person from participating in banking without appeal. The committee was mildly to not very receptive of that particular provision and had a bit of back and forth with Commissioner Kruse. Amendments were discussed, but no action has been taken. ICBND did not take a position on the bill.

### **SB 2122, SB 2123, and SB 2127**

All three Universal Commercial Code update bills (SB 2122-Real Estate Receivership, SB 2123 – Special Deposits, and SB 2127 – Electronic Estate Planning) were heard by the Senate Industry and Business Committee this week. All received Do Pass recommendations and passed the full Senate by the end of the week. ICBND was supportive of each of the bills.

### **SB 2164**

This bill was heard on Wednesday by the Senate Human Services Committee and would allow a group called the Protection and Advocacy Project to access financial records when they receive reports of suspected exploitation of vulnerable adults. ICBND opposes this bill.

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## **WEEK 2 SCHEDULE**

### **Monday, January 20**

9 a.m.	HB 1378	This bill would require a lender to pay interest on escrow accounts and includes enforcement and penalty language.	House IBL	327C
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### **Tuesday, January 21**

10 a.m.	HB 1354	This bill allows licensed appraisers to provide evaluations to banks, credit unions, etc.	House IBL	327C
2 p.m.	SB 2030	This bill includes a \$200 million appropriation to the Housing Incentive Fund to be distributed between July 1, 2025-June 30, 2029.	Senate Approps – E&E	Sakakawea

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## Wednesday, January 22

10 a.m.	HB 1447	This bill creates restrictions for virtual currency kiosks.	House IBL	327C
2 p.m.	HB 1183	This bill creates requirements for the Treasurer of North Dakota relating to investing in gold and silver and includes an interim study related to the costs and benefits of investing state funds in gold and silver during the 2025-26 interim.	House IBL	327C
2:30 p.m.	HB 1441	This bill defines gold and silver bullion as legal tender.	House IBL	327C
3 p.m.	HB 1239	This bill creates numerous protections for digital asset mining and blockchain technology.	House IBL	327C

## Thursday, January 23

9:30 a.m.	SB 2152	This bill removes agricultural land of less than eighty acres from the exemption to file a deed transferring the title with the county recorder.	Senate Ag & VA	Fort Union
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## Friday, January 24

9 a.m.	SB 2014	Industrial Commission/BND Budget	Senate Approps – E&E	Sakakawea
9:45 a.m.	SB 2014	Industrial Commission/BND Budget	Senate Approps – E&E	Sakakawea

## LEGISLATIVE DEADLINES

January 20	Deadline for Representatives to introduce bills. No more than three bills may be introduced by each Senator after this date. A Senate bill containing an appropriation clause may not be introduced after this date.
January 27	Deadline for Senators to introduce bills.
January 30	Deadline for introducing resolutions except amendments to the Constitution of North Dakota and study resolutions.
February 28	Crossover date for bills
March 3-4	Recess
March 5	Reconvene from crossover break.
March 12	Crossover date for resolutions
May 2	Session limited to 80 legislative days.

Legislator contact information can be found at <https://ndlegis.gov/contact-my-legislators>, and you can check on any legislative activities through the Legislative Council's web page at [ndlegis.gov](https://ndlegis.gov).

Thank you for your participation in the legislative process. Please call, email, or text me with any questions or concerns. If you'd like to be taken off this distribution list or if there are others in your organization that should be receiving these updates, please let me know.

Sincerely,

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