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In recent years, North Carolina lawmakers have started to think more about our state's energy policies. These efforts not only help us save money, but also help us conserve our resources and reduce our dependence on foreign oil and other energy sources from outside of our nation.

We made a number of important steps forward in this effort in this past session and I am pleased to share the highlights of our work with you.

Energy

-Legislation that will promote the use of renewable energy by extending the credit for constructing renewable fuel facilities and the credit for biodiesel producers has been ratified by the General Assembly and sent to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law ([HB 1829](#)). Among other things, the bill will also revise the tax credit for investing in renewable energy property and reinstate and expand the tax credit for a renewable energy property facility.

-The sunset on some economic incentives would be extended under a bill that has been ratified by the General Assembly and sent to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law ([HB 1973](#)). These economic incentives include a credit for constructing renewable fuel facilities, a credit for small business employee health benefits, and a credit for biodiesel producers, among others. Once enacted, the legislation will also provide an enhanced incentive for jobs in high unemployment counties.

Environment

-Certain environmental laws will be amended under a bill that has been ratified by the General Assembly and sent to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law ([HB 1099](#)). Among the changes are to (1) extend by one year the implementation of water system efficiency criteria for eligibility for state water infrastructure funds; (2) prohibit the use of high arsenic content glass beads when marking state or municipal roads or public vehicular areas; (3) modify the nutrient management strategy and adopt a sediments strategy for certain drinking water supply reservoirs; and (4) to protect and restore water quality and quantity in the Upper Neuse River Basin, Falls Lake, and other drinking water supply reservoirs by directing the environmental management commission to provide credit to local governments, land owners, and others who reduce water pollution in the Upper Neuse River Basin before permanent rules are adopted.

-A bill that modifies the computer equipment recycling plan requirements and the associated fee on manufacturers has been ratified by the General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Perdue ([SB 887 - S.L. 2010-67](#)). The legislation also makes further substantive, clarifying, technical, and conforming changes to the laws governing the management of discarded computer equipment and discarded televisions, as recommended by the Environmental Review Commission. The law is intended to ensure that end-of-life computer equipment and televisions are responsibly recycled, to promote conservation, and to protect public health and the environment. It will also provide for a comprehensive and convenient system for recycling and reuse of certain electronic equipment would be established and responsibility would be shared among manufacturers, retailers, consumers, and the state.

-Legislation to address oil spill liability, response and preparedness has been ratified by the General Assembly and sent to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law ([SB 836](#)). Among other things, the legislation will: (1) clarify liability for damages caused by the discharge of natural gas, oil, or drilling waste into state coastal fishing waters or offshore waters; (2) provide for the review of information related to proposed offshore fossil fuel facilities to determine whether they are consistent with state guidelines for the coastal area; (3) direct the Coastal Resources Commission to review existing laws and regulations that pertain to offshore energy exploration and production in light of the recent British Petroleum (BP) accident; (4) direct the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety to immediately review and update the oil spill contingency plan to prepare the state in the event that

oil discharged from the BP leak comes to the North Carolina coast; and (5) direct the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to review limitations on recovery by the state for damage to public resources and for the cost of oil or other hazardous substance cleanup.

-Legislation that will establish a task force to develop a plan for the establishment and maintenance of a statewide water and wastewater infrastructure resource and funding database has been ratified by the General Assembly and sent to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law ([HB 1746](#)).

Since our session ended, the governor has signed several pieces of legislation into law. These laws will help protect the vulnerable among us, make our education system stronger and improve our health system. These are good laws meant to help in difficult times.

Crime/Safety

-The North Carolina Supreme Court would be directed to establish minimum standards of domestic violence education and training for district court judges under a new state law ([HB 1762 - S.L. 2010-106](#)). The legislation also encourages the University of North Carolina School of Government to provide domestic violence education and training for judges and magistrates. The legislation is based on the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence.

-The penalty for the killing of an animal is increased from a Class A1 Misdemeanor to a Class H Felony under a new state law ([SB 254 - S.L. 2010-16](#)). The law also increases the penalty for the malicious abuse or torture of an animal from a Class I Felony to a Class H Felony. Susie's Law, as the legislation is commonly known, is named after a dog found burned and left to die in a Greensboro park last summer.

-Legislation that would provide a Survivor's Alternate Benefit for survivors of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty has been signed into law ([HB 766 - S.L. 2010-11](#)). Under the law, the principal beneficiary of an officer who has completed 15 years of service will be entitled to the survivor's benefit should that officer be killed in the line of duty.

-The Division of Aging and Adult Services will study whether to require criminal record checks for current and prospective owners, operators, and volunteers of adult day care programs and adult day health services programs. The legislation ([HB 1703 - S.L. 2010-93](#)) is based on the recommendations of the North Carolina Study Commission on Aging and was considered this week by the House Committee on Aging this week.

Health

-The Child Care Commission, in consultation with the Division of Child Development of the Department of Health and Human Services, would be required to develop improved nutrition standards for child care facilities under a new state law ([HB 1726 - S.L. 2010-117](#)). The legislation also directs the Division of Childcare Development to study and recommend guidelines for increased physical activity in child care facilities. The legislation is based on the recommendations of the Legislative Task Force on Childhood Obesity.

-Legislation that will allow already enrolled dependent children under the age of 26 who are not eligible for employer-based health care to remain on the North Carolina State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees for plan year 2010-2011 has been signed into law ([HB 1707 - S.L. 2010-3](#)). The legislation also directs the State Health Plan to consult with the Committee on Hospital and Medical Benefits before implanting a tobacco use testing program.

Miscellaneous

-School districts will have more flexibility to improve failing schools under a new state law. The law ([SB 704 - S.L. 2010-1](#)) gives school systems additional authority to reorganize failing schools, including the ability to operate them like charter schools. Charter schools are public schools that are exempt from some of the rules that apply to traditional schools. The legislation is expected to help strengthen the state's application for federal education money.

My office number is 733-5974 and my email address is darren.jackson@ncleg.net. I look forward to hearing from and working with you. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve. As always, please contact me if I can be of service to you.

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