

Illinois Lawmakers return for Veto Session

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The Illinois Veto Session is scheduled for October 24-26 and November 7-9. Generally, veto session is reserved for the General Assembly to consider any vetoes issues by the Governor. In recent years, veto session has been used to advance any type of legislation. This year's veto session is lining up to be an active session for both vetoes and general matters.

MHA expects some discussion on the following issues:

Modular Nuclear Reactors—Senate Bill 76 removes the moratorium on new construction of nuclear power plants to allow for the construction of both advanced and traditional large-scale nuclear reactors in Illinois.

Governor Pritzker vetoed the legislation because the vague definitions in the bill, including the overly broad definition of advanced reactors, will open the door to the proliferation of large-scale nuclear reactors that are so costly to build that they will cause exorbitant ratepayer-funded bailouts. Additionally, the administration argues it provides no regulatory protections or updates to address the health and safety of Illinois residents who would live and work around these new reactors.

To say the Sponsors of the legislation were surprised that the Governor vetoed the bill would be a massive understatement. They both argue that not only did they communicate with the Governor they openly collaborated with the Governor's team and ultimately accepted language from them. MHA expects the Senate to override the veto and the House to fail to override the veto.

MHA did not take a position on the legislation but may support an override or re-write in order to encourage additional energy supply.

Ameren Right of Refusal—Governor Pritzker issued an amendatory veto to House Bill 3445 due to the right of first refusal language inserted by Senate Amendment 4 that will raise costs for rate payers by giving incumbent utility providers in the MISO region a monopoly over new transmission lines. Eliminating competition will cause rates to increase in the MISO region, where there is currently over \$3.6 billion in planned transmission construction in the Ameren service territory. The Governor's office argues that without competition, Ameren ratepayers will pay for these transmission projects at a much higher cost, putting corporate profits over consumers.

This veto puts the Governor at odds with IBEW. Similar to the aforementioned nuclear bill, MHA expects the Senate to override the veto and the House to fail to override the veto. MHA did not take a position on the legislation.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)—Senate Bill 2164 would create a Business Improvement District statute. It would allow a minority number of businesses in a district to impose a BID on other businesses. It would also allow these businesses to assess a private tax on all other business to fund various improvements decided by a private board. As a result, businesses in these districts would have public taxes imposed by the city and private taxes imposed by a private board. Importantly, this does nothing to amend, or discontinue the current Special Service Areas located in Chicago. MHA is opposed to the current legislation.

Clean Lighting Act—House Bill 2363 creates the Clean Lighting Act and prohibits the sale of certain fluorescent lights that contain mercury in Illinois. Advocates for the legislation argue that by phasing out fluorescents in favor of efficient LED bulbs, states can avert a needless health risk, save families and business money on utility bills, and curb greenhouse gas emissions.

The advocates contend that all fluorescent bulbs contain mercury, a potent neurotoxin that threatens human health and the environment. They point to a World Health Organization study that lists mercury among the top 10 most dangerous chemicals impacting public health. They believe that when fluorescent bulbs are accidentally broken—whether in homes, businesses, or the waste management system—the lights present a health hazard to those nearby. And when fluorescent bulbs are not disposed of properly mercury leaches from landfills and eventually contaminates rivers, lakes, and oceans and the fish and shellfish within them. The advocates support a transition to LEDs, which are mercury-free, are a much safer option. Finally from the environmental perspective, the advocates believe that LEDs use approximately half the electricity as fluorescent bulbs to produce the same amount of light. As a result, accelerating the transition to LEDs can reduce planet-warming emissions from power plants and help prevent the worst effects of climate change.

Separate and distinct from the health and environmental concerns, advocates argue that fluorescent bulbs are no longer the most affordable lighting option. Because they are more energy efficient than fluorescents, LEDs cost less to operate, more than paying back their slightly higher upfront costs—which continue to drop each year—through lower electric bills. LEDs also last about twice as long as fluorescents, so they need to be replaced less often. And because LEDs do not contain mercury, a hazardous waste, they can be disposed of more easily and cheaply than fluorescents when the time comes.

Currently the following states have phased out fluorescent light bulbs that contain mercury:

State	Screw-base CFL phaseout date	Pin-base CFL and fluorescent tube phaseout date
California	January 1, 2024	January 1, 2025
Colorado	January 1, 2025	January 1, 2025
Hawaii	January 1, 2025	January 1, 2026
Maine	January 1, 2025	January 1, 2026
Oregon	January 1, 2024	January 1, 2025
Rhode Island	January 1, 2024	January 1, 2025
Vermont	February 17, 2023	January 1, 2024