

## Report on 2009 Interim Studies

There were over 200 House and Senate interim studies proposed following the end of the 2009 Legislative Session. Due to the diverse nature of municipal interests, a number of the studies impact municipal operations to some degree. Below is a preliminary list and summary of approximately 30 studies. As always, it is helpful for us to have your feedback on these issues. We will be assessing these studies for those that are viable and provide you additional information as warranted.

Several interim studies of note include those on impact fees, TIF financing and initiative/referendum each of which were issues stopped by municipalities in the 2009 Legislative session. A study on the fiscal effects of the Oklahoma Education Association's HOPE initiative, the proposed study of property taxes apparently led by schools, counties and rural interests, a review into the practice of compensating vendors for collecting sales tax and future transportation projects directly impact municipal funding. In addition, the major public utilities participating in the study of the Underground Facilities Damage Prevention Act is one to watch. As always, water seems to be a major legislative topic, and this year's interim studies are no exception. There are three approved studies which potentially impact vital municipal growth.

This year municipal interests were dealt a blow when Rep. Blackwell and Rep. Dorman were denied a study into disaster funding. As you know, although we have been successful in securing state funds of \$15 million in 2008 and \$15 million in 2009, disaster funding has been a major issue over the past few years for cities and towns. In obtaining past funding, we have been forced to pull out all the stops to sway the state to pay its portion of funding due to floods, fires, ice storms and the like. In lieu of this piecemeal approach with annual battles, we have been actively lobbying for a permanent, long-term funding source. We are working with the two legislators on a strategy to move forward. In addition, we have invited Rep. Blackwell and Rep. Dorman to discuss this issue at the upcoming OML Conference in Tulsa.

### Airports

Study Oklahoma's regional and municipal airports. Study Number 2009H-145 by Rep. Wright.

### Ambulance/Health Care

Study Emergency Medical Services funding and statewide coverage. Study members include the Professional Fire Fighters of Oklahoma, Broken Arrow Fire Department, OSU, Oklahoma Ambulance Association, Air Evac Lifeteam, State Health Department, Johnston County EMS, Buffalo EMS and Eastern Oklahoma Development District. Study Number 2009H-016 by Rep. Cox, Rep. Richardson and Rep. Roan.

Examine ways to increase local control by citizens of their county Emergency Medical Services. Study Number 2009S-032 by Sen. Sparks and Rep. Richardson.

Explore funding for PPO's Health Care for rural Oklahoma. Study Number 2009S-022 by Sen. Justice.

### Finance

Study municipal impact fees and the goal of homebuilders to place controls on municipal discretion. This arises out of our successful efforts to prevent **SB 805** from becoming law. Study members included in the study include the City of Tulsa, City of Oklahoma City,

Oklahoma Municipal League and Homebuilders Association. Study Number 2009H-004 by Rep. Liebmann.

Explore Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts in Oklahoma. As you are aware, we have been successful in defeating legislative proposals in the past several Legislative Sessions which would greatly restrict municipal ability to pursue vital economic development projects utilizing TIFs. Study Number 2009H-070 by Rep. Dorman.

Study economic development and workforce incentives in Tulsa. Study Number 2009S-026 by Sen. Newberry.

Monitor and evaluate federal stimulus projects coming into Oklahoma to determine if the state is eligible for additional infrastructure development funds. Study Number 2009H-166 by Rep. Jett.

Explore state initiatives to bring grocers into low income and newly re-established urban districts. Study members include the Oklahoma City Planning Department, Oklahoma City/County Health Department and Oklahoma Grocers Association. Study Number 2009H-052 by Rep. Morrisette.

### **Municipal Court**

Study cell phone use and texting while driving. Study Number 2009H-082 by Rep. Morgan and Rep. Tibbs.

Review of laws on dangerous/vicious dogs. Study Number 2009H-034 by Rep. Collins and 2009H-140 by Rep. Terrill.

### **Operations**

Joint study on high speed internet services in Oklahoma. Study Numbers 2009S-007 by Sen. Bingman and 2009H-112 by Rep. Thompson.

Study the current status of the Oklahoma Universal Service Fund in the Oklahoma Telecommunications Act of 1997. Funds are currently used to promote toll free lines and internet connectivity for, among others, city-county health departments and libraries. Study Number 2009H-131 by Rep. Nelson and Rep. Derby.

Review of Oklahoma's initiative and referendum process. Study Number 2009H-120 by Rep. Terrill.

### **Public Safety**

Identify and evaluate current funding sources for law enforcement. Study Number 2009H-162 by Rep. Jett.

Investigate appropriate duties for new hires prior to law enforcement training and certification including reserve officers. Study Number 2009H-138 by Rep. Christian.

Examine rules and rates established for wrecker operations for towing initiated by law enforcement. Study Number 2009H-097 by Rep. Harold Wright.

Study the efficiency, effectiveness and costs of rural firefighter training. Study Number 2009H-069 by Rep. Dorman.

### **Taxation**

Ad Valorem Property Tax Task Force focusing on support for schools, county government and technology centers. One of the areas of focus is municipal sinking funds. Among study members included in the Task Force are Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Cattlemen's Association, Home Builders Association, schools and counties, business and industry. Study Number 2009H-121 by Rep. Mike Jackson.

Study the fiscal impact to the state budget of the HOPE initiative regarding constitutional spending requirements for Oklahoma public schools. As you recall, the Helping Oklahoma Public Education (HOPE) state question (**SQ 744**) is an attempt to add \$850 Million in annual school funding. This Oklahoma Education Association project will be voted on by the people in 2010.

The constitutional amendment would require the legislature to fund education at the average per student rate of surrounding states. If passed, this will currently increase funding by \$1,400 per student. To put this funding level in perspective, with a total state budget of \$7 billion, the State Chamber estimates that eliminating the entire state transportation budget would provide roughly half the additional funding necessary to meet this constitutional funding level. Study Number 2009H-017 by Rep. Osburn.

Review the practice of compensating vendors for collecting sales tax. Study Number 2009H-025 by Rep. Morgan.

### **Transportation**

Study tribal road program partnerships. Study Number 2009H-164 by Rep. Shannon.

Explore transportation studies and research on the feasibility of passenger rail connection between Newton, Kansas and Tulsa and Oklahoma City as well as connecting Tinker and downtown Oklahoma City. Study Number 2009H-081 by Rep. Joyner.

Study the long term transportation infrastructure needs of the State of Oklahoma. Study Number 2009H-090 by Speaker Benge.

### **Underground Facilities Damage Prevention Act**

Study issues arising under **HB 1644** from the 2009 Legislative Session. We opposed this bill and were successful in preventing it from becoming law. As you recall, the bill amended the Underground Facilities Damage Prevention Act by eliminating current law's exemption for municipalities from participating in the statewide one-call notification center. This would result in undue delay in an emergency situation if a city or town must jump through the hoops which will be required by state law. In addition, the bill created fines for a municipality as an excavator under the Act.

Members participating in this joint interim study include Oklahoma Municipal League, AT&T, ORWA, PSO, Oklahoma One-Call, OG&E, ONG, Center Point, Small Tel and Shouse Consulting. Study Numbers 2009H-011 by Rep. Rousselot and 2009S-011 by Sen. Garrison.

### **Water**

Study the ongoing OWRB Comprehensive Water Plan. Study Number 2009S-030 by Sen. Paddock.

Explore hard rock mining over sole source aquifers (Arbuckle Simpson). Study Number 2009S-028 by Sen. Paddock.

Study various water issues including water infrastructure, Tarrant County legal issues and Native American participation. Study Number 2009H-165 by Rep. Jett.

Water Needs in Southwestern Oklahoma. Interim study members include the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Oklahoma Rural Water Association and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. Study number 2009H-056 by Rep. Armes, Rep. Holland and Rep. Ortega:  
*Combined with Rep. Jett's study*