



Thursday, February 16, 2017

Three Fracking Trade Secrets Bills Defeated - One to Go

On February 13, [HB 1678 \(Robinson\)](#) was rejected on an 8-6 vote by the Senate General Laws and Technology Committee. VACo opposed the bill, which would have established procedures for the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy to approve “trade secret” status for certain chemicals used in the process of hydraulic fracturing or “fracking.” Earlier in the session, the Senate companion to HB 1678, [SB 1292 \(Chafin\)](#), was defeated on an 8-8 vote by the Senate Finance Committee.

The final surviving bill opposed by VACo relating to trade secret status for “fracking” chemicals is [HB 1679 \(Robinson\)](#). The chief provision of HB 1679 identifies conditions under which trade secret information may be disclosed in certain emergency situations. HB 1679 is scheduled to be heard by the [Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee](#) on the afternoon of February 16, 30 minutes after adjournment of the Senate floor session. The House companion measure to HB 1679 was [SB 1291 \(Chafin\)](#), which was also defeated by the Senate Finance Committee on an 8-8 vote.

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VACo Contact: [Larry Land, CAE](#)

Agritourism Home Rental Bill Dies in Subcommittee

On February 13, [SB 1491 \(Stuart\)](#) was tabled on a voice vote in the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee’s Agriculture Subcommittee. This bill would have expanded the definition of “agritourism activity” by including the rental of a single-family residence for a period of at least one week.

VACo spoke against the measure as it would weaken local land use regulatory authority.

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Key Dates for 2017 General Assembly Session

- **January 11:** General Assembly convenes at noon. Prefiled legislation must be submitted by 10 a.m.; this is also the last day to file bills dealing with the Virginia Retirement System or legislation creating or continuing a study.
- **January 13:** Budget amendments by General Assembly members must be submitted by 5 p.m.
- **January 20:** All bills must be filed by 3 p.m.
- **February 5:** The Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees must report their respective budgets.
- **February 7:** Crossover (deadline for legislation to pass its chamber of origin)
- **February 9:** Deadline for each chamber to complete work on its budget
- **February 20:** Deadline for committee action on legislation
- **February 25:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*
- **April 5:** Reconvened session to consider the Governor's amendments and vetoes