



THE CLAY FIRM

NEWSLETTER

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CAPITOL REPORT

The Legislature hit another key deadline this week, as Thursday marked the cutoff for floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments in their original chamber. Roughly 530 general bills remain alive and will now cross over for consideration in the opposite chamber. Lawmakers now face a March 3 deadline to report general bills out of committee, marking the next milestone for measures originating in the other house. The next two weeks will bring lots of movement on appropriations and revenue measures, with February 25 serving as the deadline for floor action on these fiscal bills.

Following the wintery storm that hit northern Missis-



issippi a few weeks ago, legislators are looking at ways to improve disaster relief efforts. [SB 2632](#) creates the Local Governments Disaster Recovery Emergency Loan Program Act as a resource for localities to utilize when a catastrophe or emergency strikes. The program provides immediate cash flow for counties and cities to cover FEMA-eligible disaster costs.

The restoration of a ballot initiative once again died in the Legislature this week. After the Supreme Court ruled in 2021 that Mississippi's ballot initiative process was unconstitutional, legislators have been trying to reinstate a process for citizens to put issues to a statewide vote. Even though [SCR 518](#) passed out of the Senate Elections Committee last week, it saw much backlash when being debated on the floor and was eventually tabled.

Both the House and Senate have adjourned for the weekend and will reconvene on Monday at 4:00 p.m.

METRO JACKSON WATER AUTHORITY

Jackson's water and sewer could soon be under a new government entity. [HB 1677](#) creates the Metro Jackson Water Authority to oversee and manage water and wastewater systems in the Metro Jackson area. The authority will lease water and wastewater assets from the City of Jackson and assume management after the current interim third-party water director leaves his

post. The nine-person authority would comprise appointees from the Mayors of Jackson, Bryam, and Ridgeland; the Governor; the Lt. Governor; and the Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce.

The Mississippi Legislature has attempted to pass legislation in previous years addressing Jackson's water system, but HB 1677 has momentum

to potentially make it across the finish line. Author of the bill, Representative Shanda Yates said she received input on the bill from the Jackson delegation and the Mayor's Office.

The bill passed by a vote of 96-12 and now heads to the Senate for consideration.



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Q U I C K H I T T E R S

1) Governor Tate Reeves announced last week that President Donald Trump approved his Major Disaster Declaration for Mississippi for all counties with verified damage following the historic ice storm that hit the state during the last week of January. Gov. Reeves formally submitted the request on February 3, and the federal government has since committed \$39.1 million to support the state's ongoing response and recovery efforts.

2) The federal government will soon be sending \$528 million to Mississippi under the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act. Mississippi's US Senator Roger Wicker, who chairs the Senate Armed Forces Committee, said the direct funding is authorized for Mississippi military installations, universities, and construction projects, such as upgrades at Meridian's Readiness Center and Key Field Air National Guard Base.

3) Governor Tate Reeves announced Tuesday that Mississippi has received final federal approval for its comprehensive plan to expand broadband infrastructure to every area of the state still lacking high-speed internet access. The Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi will administer the program and oversee the statewide buildout. BEAM accepted applications from internet providers last summer to select awardees. Preliminary awards total more than \$508 million to reach 93,000 unserved households, with participating providers contributing an additional \$321 million in private funding to complete the expansion.