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Republican Governors Public Policy Committee
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Energy and Environment

Gov. Baker Receives Support for Hydropower Legislation (GoLocalWorcester.com) – Governor Charlie Baker has received bipartisan support from three former secretaries of energy and environmental affairs for the administration's effort to diversify the state's energy portfolio through the procurement of cost effective, hydropower generation. Those who support Baker from energy and environmental affairs include Maeve Vallely-Bartlett, Rick Sullivan, and Ian Bowles. "I appreciate the support from our state's former top energy officials as our administration aims to pursue a balanced, diversified energy portfolio through the pursuit of hydroelectric power. This endorsement is illustrative of the pressing need to address Massachusetts' rising energy costs, increase electricity grid reliability and reduce carbon emissions to meet the Commonwealth's energy and environmental goals," said Governor Charlie Baker.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Governor Dugaard signs Uber bill into law (KSFY) – Ride-sharing services like Uber are one step closer to being able to operate in South Dakota. Governor Dugaard signed HB 1091 into law on Tuesday, otherwise known as the 'Uber Bill.' Uber currently operates in 300 cities and in 46 states across the United States. The law excludes Transportation Network (TNC) drivers from being required to have commercial license plates and commercial driver licenses.

Economic Development

Arizona House approves 204-percent 'flex' loans (The Arizona Republic) – A bill authorizing short-term loans at an annual interest rate of 204 percent squeaked through the Arizona House of Representatives Monday after intense lobbying to lift the 36-percent cap on the state's usury statutes. The 31-26 vote moves the debate to the Senate, where the bill died last month in a committee but was revived as a strike-everything amendment. Senate Bill 1316 would permit flexible-credit loans of up to \$2,500 for a maximum two-year period. It proposes a 17-percent monthly interest rate for unsecured loans, which works out to 204 percent annual interest. Secured loans would carry a slightly lower rate: 15 percent per month, or 180 percent annually.

Honda investing \$52M to expand production, career training in Indiana (WTHR) - Honda Manufacturing of Indiana (HMIN) announced Tuesday the company would invest \$52 million in its Greensburg facility, creating up to 100 new jobs. The investment will go toward enhanced job training and additional production of the Honda CR-V. The new jobs are expected to be added by the end of this year in order to support that new line of production. "Honda has been a great partner to the state of Indiana from the moment the company announced plans to establish a facility in Greensburg in 2006," said Governor Pence, who was on hand for the announcement. "I have had the pleasure of meeting with the company's leadership here in the United States and in Japan, and I am proud that they have once again chosen Indiana for growth. The automotive industry in Indiana supports more than 100,000 Hoosier jobs, and that number will continue to grow thanks to the commitment of companies like Honda."

Mississippi governor signs workforce training fund into law (AP) - Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant has signed into law a bill that establishes a state fund for workforce training programs. Senate Bill 2808 creates the Mississippi Works Fund to support state-approved programs run mostly out of community colleges. The fund was created out of a surplus in the state's unemployment compensation fund. It will start off with \$10 million in its first year. Seventy-five percent of the money will go toward new job creation. The bill also cuts the minimum unemployment tax rate that employers pay to zero percent.

OSHA set to issue silica rule (The Hill) - The Labor Department is preparing to issue controversial silica protections for workers. After years of delay, the Labor Department could finalize the silica rules as early as this week, after they were quietly approved by the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Monday. One source speculated the Labor

Department will announce the silica rule on Thursday. The final rules have not yet been revealed to the public, but the proposed regulation called for manufacturers to cut in half workers's exposure to silica dust, which has been linked to cancer.

Public Safety

Kansas House passes juvenile justice reforms ([The Wichita Eagle](#)) - Fewer juvenile offenders would face incarceration under legislation passed by an overwhelming majority in the Kansas House on Monday. SB 367 enacts a series of changes in the state's juvenile justice system, placing a greater emphasis on therapeutic options that allow non-violent juvenile offenders to remain at home than be incarcerated. The bill, which passed the House 117-6, is expected to save the state about \$72 million over five years. The bill shifts the state's reliance from detention centers to community-based programs. Supporters say research has shown these programs are more effective at curbing recidivism and allow offenders to remain in school, increasing the likelihood that they'll graduate from high school.

Supreme Court orders Massachusetts to review ban on stun guns ([AP](#)) – The Supreme Court came together Monday on the unlikely issue of guns, ordering Massachusetts' top court to look again at the state's ban on stun guns. The justices, with no apparent dissent, issued an unsigned opinion in favor of Jaime Caetano, who was convicted of violating the state's anti-stun gun law. Caetano said she kept a stun gun in her purse for self-defense against an abusive former boyfriend. Massachusetts is among a handful of states that prohibit possession of stun guns. The state Supreme Judicial Court upheld the ban and said the Second Amendment's right to bear arms does not extend to stun guns. But the nation's high court said "the explanation the Massachusetts court offered for upholding the law contradicts this court's precedent." The justices were referring to the court's 2008 ruling in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that struck down Washington, D.C.,'s handgun ban and said the Constitution guarantees the right to a gun, at least for self-defense at home.

Education

Otter signs community college bill ([The Post Register](#)) – Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter on Tuesday signed a bill that will create an account to hold \$5 million, which would go toward transitioning Eastern Idaho Technical College into a two-year community college. Otter told the those gathered for the signing that there are some bills he would like to sign "with an exclamation mark." "There's only so many portals available for getting ahead in life, but the more of those we can make, the better workforce we're going to develop, the better citizenry we're going to develop," Otter said. The signing ceremony included senators and representatives from the Idaho Falls area, along with state higher education and economic development representatives.

Literacy Initiative funding will help every child in Idaho read at their grade level ([KLEW](#)) - State officials say thousands of elementary students in Idaho are not reading at their grade level, but those students may soon get the extra help that they need. Across the state of Idaho, officials say about 37,000 K through three students are not reading at grade level, and education leaders are working to try to close that literacy gap. But hope is near. Last Friday, the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee approved \$9.1 million for Governor Otter's Literacy Initiative. The funding would cover 30 to 60 hours of extra help for students who are struggling with reading.

Healthcare

Gov. Hutchinson breaks down 'Arkansas Works' ([THV 11](#)) - The newly reformed Arkansas' health care program is just two weeks away from being voted on for the first time. It's called "Arkansas Works," which is a hybrid restructure of private option, the state's version of the Affordable Care Act. Tuesday was Governor Hutchinson's first town hall meeting since his election. It's what he believes is best for a healthy Arkansas right now regardless of who is in the White House next. "There's a great work ethic in this state, people want to work, people want to have opportunities," said Gov. Hutchinson. Making work is Governor Hutchinson's focus for the new health care plan for the state. Arkansas Works will replace the private option, which by law ends on the last day of 2016.

Christie Touts Recovery Coach Program for Addicts ([NJTV News](#)) - Recovery Coach John Brogan sat at a roundtable with Gov. Chris Christie and described a kid who he says OD'ed on a mixture of heroin and rat poison. He ended up at Monmouth Medical Center. "He's being revived and he comes back to life and there he is. That's our opportunity to go to the next level. In every case they all have one common thing. Some of them are angry, some of them are sad, some of them are depressed, it depends. When we get down with them on their level and say 'I know exactly how you're feeling the tears start,'" Brogan said. Brogan's also recovering addict — part of the \$1.7 million Recovery Coach program that kicked off this January in Monmouth and Ocean counties, where the heroin epidemic's raging. It pairs Narcan reversal patients with coaches. All the counselors here must be at least four years clean.