Written by By Andy Lyman NM Political Report
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SANTA FE, NM–The New Mexico Legislature did in four hours what couldn't be done in 60 days earlier this year: pass legislation to fund infrastructure projects throughout the state, as well as two other bills. While there was some debate among lawmakers, lawmakers easily passed legislation with few dissenting votes June 8.

A bill that proved controversial during the regular session was the capital outlay bill. SB 1, sponsored by Sen. Carlos Cisneros, D-Questa, aimed to authorize $295 million help pay for about 1,000 projects around New Mexico. After a brief debate, the Senate passed the capital outlay bill in a committee of the whole and shortly thereafter the full Senate.

Capital outlay did not move as fast through the House, though. The House Ways and Means Committee passed the legislation with minimal debate, but the measure came up against much more criticism on the House floor. Those who criticized the bill voiced their concerns and said they would still vote for the bill even though they viewed it as flawed. Ultimately, the House voted unanimously in favor of the bill.

Another controversial measure held up in the last minutes of the regular session was a bill full of various tax incentives. This time, the bill started on the House side and also quickly made its way through the committee process.

The tax package, sponsored by Rep. Tim Lewis, R-Albuquerque, will allow a certain amount of out of pocket medical expenses to be deducted from an individual's state tax returns. HB 2 also provides a tax break to companies that work with certain technologies associated with the U.S Department of Defense. The House Ways and Means Committee voted unanimously to pass the bill.

On the floor, Rep. Matthew McQueen, D-Galisteo, attempted to amend the bill to include a solar tax credit.The House voted 33-29 against amending the tax bill. The tax legislation passed the House floor with only two dissenting votes, both from Democrats. In a committee of the whole, the Senate ultimately voted in favor of the tax package through a voice vote.

HB 1, sponsored by House Majority Leader Nate Gentry, R-Albuquerque, served two purposes. The bill intended to fund the special session as well as appropriate money to the Department of Health and the Administrative Office of the Courts. The legislation earmarked $4 million for DOH and $300,000 for the Office of the Courts.

The bill, known as the feed bill, passed the House Ways and Means Committee with some debate, but ultimately unanimously. It passed the House with no debate and another unanimous ‘yes’ vote. The feed bill also swiftly moved through the Senate.

After the special session, Gov. Susana Martinez told reporters that she was happy with the results of the day and pleased to see the bipartisan effort put forth by lawmakers

“Today is a good day for New Mexicans and their families,” she said during a news conference.

She credited the brief session to previous negotiations made between her and legislators. Of the process leading up to the special session she said, “We worked really hard before we called a special session to come to agreements that we would walk in and have those agreements in hand.”

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