



January 21, 2025

Senate Subcommittee Kills Skill Game Bill

Last evening a subcommittee of the Senate General Laws and Technology effectively killed skill game legislation for the year. The bill, sponsored by Senator Christie New Craig of Chesapeake, was a new and improved version of legislation that passed the Assembly just last year with bipartisan support. The senator's bill was supported by a diverse group including Kunal Kumar of Pooja Group. Opposition was led by the casinos and Churchill Downs, operator of Rosie's and approximately 5,000 slot machines across the state. Certainly, another important aspect was the testimony of Governor Youngkin's legislative director who stated that the governor opposes the bill. While things could change, at this point further consideration of skill games will have to wait until the next administration.

Legislation Targets Heating Fuel and Propane Marketers

The final day for bill introduction was last Friday. While there are always surprises during that time we were especially dismayed to see [HB 2744](#) by Delegate Mark Sickles of Fairfax County. The bill proposes to use state or federal funds to convert low income homes heated by fuel oil or propane to electricity. It would target only those residences where fuel is delivered to the household and stored onsite and utilized for household heating, cooking, or water heating. We are working closely with the members of the propane association to defeat this misguided proposal and will be meeting with the delegate tomorrow.

Ratepayer Subsidization of Electric Chargers Likely to be Taken Up This Week

We have previously reported on legislation that would allow electric utilities to use ratepayer funds to subsidize the development and installation of electric vehicle fast chargers. This inherently unfair competition amounts to affording a regulated monopoly a gift. Our members' marketing and expansion efforts are entirely self-funded, but supporters of the bill, led by the leftist Natural Resources Defense Council, are seeking to convince legislators that unfairness to Virginia based businesses does not matter so long as it is part of their long term plan to eliminate internal combustion engines. They neglect to mention the fact that EV's pay a fraction of what the motor fuels tax is paid by gasoline and diesel purchasers. This trend, if left unchecked, will bankrupt Virginia's Transportation Trust Fund.

Tobacco Sales

There are various bills that follow up on last year's legislation increasing the penalty for underage sales of tobacco products. The apparent target was to re-impose penalties for those under 21 years old that possess tobacco products illegally. While the [House bill 1946](#) is mostly a clean-up of 2024's legislation, [Senate bill 1147](#) by Senator Timmy French doubles penalties for underage sales and throws out many of the carefully negotiated provisions of last year's bill, by doubling fines and making suspensions mandatory after a second underage sale. We will be endeavoring to modify those provisions over the coming weeks.