



MVMA State Legislative Update

Record snowfalls have recently tied Boston in knots, and it would be reasonable to think that this is why the Massachusetts legislature is off to a rather slow start for 2015. Most notably, bills filed for the 2015-16 session have still not been assigned bill numbers or referred to committees.

However, there are other factors that also play a part in this delay.

Newly-elected Senate President Stan Rosenberg announced his leadership and committee assignments nearly a month ago, with most of the 40 Democratic senators being tapped either to chair a Senate committee or co-chair a joint House-Senate panel. That chamber also created three new Senate standing committees (Redistricting, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Personnel and Administration) and adopted its own rules for the 2015-16 session.

On the House side, Speaker Robert DeLeo was re-elected on January 7 and the House approved its own rules a week later. DeLeo, however, has not yet named his leadership team or announced appointments to House and joint committees.

In the meantime, both the House and Senate have released bill titles and docket numbers, but have not yet assigned bill numbers or released bill texts. Once numbered, bills are typically referred immediately to committees, but this is not likely to happen until the two chambers come to agreement on joint rules governing how these committees function.

It is hard to predict when this logjam will be cleared, but there is talk at the State House of a House Democratic caucus on Wednesday, February 25. It now seems likely that, at the very least, House leadership and committee assignments could be announced and approved then.

In this session the MVMA is seeking support from the legislature to allow veterinarians to have compounded substances available at their hospitals for emergency purposes.