

MWA Legislative Issues Update – Winter 2024 – Matt Kurta, Karoub Associates

Last August, Governor Whitmer outlined her priorities for the fall, when the Legislature returned to session after a two-month summer recess, in anticipation of a limited period of time remaining in 2023 with full Democratic control of state government. The Michigan Legislature responded with a flurry of legislative activity before adjourning for the year effective November 14, including enactment of a comprehensive energy and climate package aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing renewable energy development.

On Election Day in November, Democratic Representatives Lori Stone (D-Warren) and Kevin Coleman (D-Westland) won elections to become Mayor of their respective hometowns. Both legislators have resigned from the House to begin serving in their new roles, temporarily stripping Democrats of their previous 56-54 majority in the Michigan House.

The partisan composition of the House now stands tied at 54-54 and will remain tied until these two vacancies are filled. Governor Whitmer has called special Primary and General Elections, to take place on January 30th, 2024 and April 16, 2024. As both seats are overwhelmingly Democratic in terms of their partisan base composition, they are anticipated to be filled by new Democratic legislators who would return Democrats to the majority in the House shortly after April 16.

In the meantime, Rep. Joe Tate (D-Detroit) continues to serve, as Speaker of the House and Democrats continue to maintain majority control of committees, legislation cannot move on the House floor without bipartisan support. So, as we enter an unprecedented period in Michigan political history, it appears that legislative activity may temporarily slow down until both vacancies are filled as we enter another election season.

On the policy front, we will continue to work with the Whitmer Administration and key legislators to urge consideration of a comprehensive, holistic approach to inland lakes water quality management.