

ACEC

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of Michigan

2020 CAPITOL UPDATE YEAR IN REVIEW



L to R: Christopher Cook, PE, Abonmarche; Steven Gravin, PE, Michael Baker & Associates; Governor Gretchen Whitmer; Ronald Brenke, PE, ACEC/Michigan

The legislature adjourned *sine die* at 11:15 a.m. on Monday, December 21, ending the 100th Legislature. This past year involved a large focus on funding to support the State's response to the COVID-19 virus. Shortfalls in the State budget were constantly being monitored as the Governor issued stay-at-home orders and many businesses were required to temporarily shut down to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

State Historic Preservation Tax Credits Reinstated

ACEC/Michigan supported legislation to restore the Historic Preservation Tax Credit (Senate Bill 54) that was phased out in 2011. The tax credits will stimulate more historic rehabilitation projects and can be used to leverage the federal historic tax credit of 20%. The bill is limited by a \$5 million annual cap in a calendar year and no taxpayer could claim a credit of more than \$2 million for a single property. The Governor signed the legislation into law.

Highway Tolling Study

Senate Bill 517 was strongly supported by ACEC/Michigan and was signed into law as Public Act 140 by Governor Whitmer in July 2020. The bill requires MDOT to engage an outside consulting firm to conduct a feasibility study and strategic implementation plan on tolling highways in Michigan. The study is underway and being completed by an ACEC member firm. A written report is due to the Governor and leaders of the House and Senate by July 8, 2022. This bill does not permit tolling highways in Michigan but provides key information to the legislature on the feasibility of tolling Michigan highways.

Public-Private Agreements for Public Bridges

Senate Bills 1215-1218 were introduced to allow the use of a public-private agreement to repair and/or replace failing bascule bridges owned by a city under the Home Rule Act. Although the legislation was written for any Michigan city, it is targeted for two bascule bridges in Bay City. ACEC/Michigan supported the legislation which was signed into law by the Governor in December. The legislation will allow the P3 project to move forward and funding for the project will be provided by a concessionaire. User fees imposed on the bridges will be used to reimburse the concessionaire over time for the cost of the improvements.

Good Moral Character

Good moral character clauses in various Michigan occupational statutes are used when determining the eligibility of an applicant for licensure or registration in a particular occupation or trade. The legislature spent considerable time during the session to adopt legislation that would clarify when a criminal offense would prohibit individuals from becoming licensed. (cont'd on page 2)

Good Moral Character (cont'd)

The legislature generally believed that licensing boards were being too restrictive and would disqualify applicants convicted of specific offenses, either for their lifetime or for a specified period, from eligibility to work in a particular occupation or profession. ACEC/Michigan worked closely with Rep. Brandt Iden on House Bill 4488 to adopt language that was fair and consistent for those applying for licensure under Article 20 of the Occupational Code. HB 4488 was passed and signed by the Governor on January 4, 2021.

2021 ACEC Legislative Events

State Legislative Day
March 19
Virtual

National Legislative Summit
April 25-28, 2021
Marriott Wardman Park
Washington, D.C.

ACEC/M PAC Chair

Chuck Gemayel, PE
SME



530 W. Ionia Street, Suite D
Lansing, MI 48933
acecmi.org | 517.332.2066

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**met or exceeded 2020 firm goal*