

News from ESFPA

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www.esfpa.org (518) 463-1297

mchurch@esfpa.org

Budget Update – As best as we can tell.....

Hold TIGHT.....The Budget is NOT done yet....It has been a bit of a wild budget year in Albany, and as you've probably been reading in the news, it's not over yet. After weekend of work trying to finalize a budget agreement close to the April 1 deadline, the Senate, Assembly and Governor could not reach a deal. The Governor delivered to the Legislature a set of "extender" bills that keep government running through May 31. In addition, the Senate and the Assembly have started to pass final 2017-2018 Budget bills. The following is what we do know as of right now. So far we have three of our priorities mentioned.

Wood Products Development Council \$100,000

Environmental Protection Funds \$300 million. But language from the Governor's original Article VII bill in January and does not reflect what had been negotiated between the Governor and the Legislature. And as of today, there is still some confusion as to what the Governor's Language is. We will have more to come.

Workforce Development Institute \$400,000 – These funds are for Paul Smiths College and NYLT, Inc for Logger Training efforts across the state.

In regards for **Empire Forests for the Future**: There is nothing in the Budget now that would deal with: Forest Property Tax relief: 480A and 480B; 2 new Grant Programs: private forest stewardship or Community Forests; harvest notification; or State Procurement Preference for Wood Products

Given the nature of this budget and the budget extenders through May 31st, we are not sure what the future holds for the Governor's EFF Initiative.

We will have to wait and see after the Easter Recess to determine what, if anything will happen.

For the near term we will monitor the budget bills and report back to you as we see them. We expect that the Legislature will finish acting on them today and then head back to their Districts for the Easter break and not return until April 24th.

Oh to live in interesting times! We will update you as we know when things are solidified and settled.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the office or John Bartow at 518-573-1441.