



[Find Legislators](#)

[Bill Search](#)

[Contact the Chamber](#)

View Next Week's Legislative Calendars: [House](#) | [Senate](#)

The Key Three: English Only Driver License Bill is Back, Wetlands Legislation Heard in Committee, and Legislation Filed on Franchise Tax

Tennessee Chamber Notes Concerning Legislation Impacting Driver License:

[HB1730](#), introduced by [Representative Kip Capley \(R-Summertown\)](#) requires all written driver license examinations to be administered in English only. The proposed legislation prohibits the use of a translation dictionary, electronic device, or interpreter to assist with the examination, as currently allowed. According to the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, applicants are currently able to take the written driver examinations online or in person in English, Spanish, Korean, German, and Japanese. The bill has been referred to the House Transportation Subcommittee. [Click here to view committee members.](#)

Tennessee's welcoming, pro-business policies have attracted a business community that is made up of countless multinational companies including direct investment from Japan, South Korea, Spain, Germany, and more. Further, Tennessee is home to "1,000+ foreign-based businesses that have invested over \$47 billion in capital and employ more than 161,900 Tennesseans" ([TNECD](#)). The proposed legislation adds a significant burden to the business community which employs productive workers who speak languages other than English. The Chamber and business community have significant concerns about the negative impact this legislation could have on Tennessee employers and employees.

Fireworks in House Agriculture Subcommittee Over Wetlands Legislation

Over the summer, the Tennessee Chamber worked to convene a number of business groups regarding proposed legislation that would define an isolated wetland. On Tuesday, [Representative Kevin Vaughan \(R-Collierville\)](#) presented [HB1054](#) to the House Agriculture Subcommittee, legislation supported by the Chamber and other business groups. This bill would provide clarity to landowners and businesses over which wetlands the state of Tennessee has the authority to regulate. Officials from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) also provided testimony, offering to work with Representative Vaughan on changes to his proposal. In TDEC's view, the state should have the ability to regulate certain, significant wetlands that the bill would have exempted. The Tennessee Chamber is working with Representative Vaughan and TDEC to see if a solution can be found that balances businesses need for clarity and certainty with TDEC's goal of maintaining control over what it deems significant wetlands. The Subcommittee ran out of time and will continue debating the bill next week as stakeholders continue to work on final language. Video of the testimony can be found [here](#).

Administration Introduces Franchise Tax Bill, Tax Credits Noted

[Majority Leader William Lamberth \(R-Portland\)](#) introduced [HB 1893](#), legislation aimed at addressing a potential constitutional issue with the current structure of the franchise portion of

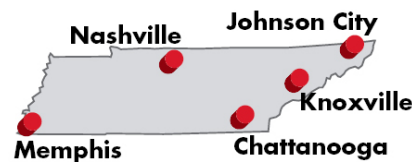
the franchise and excise tax paid by businesses in the state of Tennessee. Currently, businesses' franchise tax liability is based on the greater of net worth or the book value of real and tangible personal property owned or used in Tennessee. The proposal would repeal the alternative measure of the franchise tax using real and tangible personal property. According to testimony from Commissioner Bryson and Commissioner Gerregano, Governor Lee is pushing this legislation because the Attorney General has found that the alternative measure likely violates the Commerce Clause and would be found unconstitutional should it be challenged in court. The bill also includes a provision that would require the state to issue a refund to businesses that have overpaid as a result of the alternative measure. Businesses would be eligible to apply for refunds for overpayments that have occurred during the past three years.

For more details on the bill, check out [this](#) piece from Carl Hartley, Chair of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce's Tax Committee. The Chamber looks forward to working with the General Assembly to ensure that the state continues to lower taxes and simplify the tax code for businesses in Tennessee.

BAKER DONELSON

We have you AND the state
of Tennessee covered.

www.bakerdonelson.com



**ENVIRONMENT &
ENERGY UPDATE**



Environment & Energy Committee to Meet February 6: The Chamber's Environment and Energy Committee will meet Thursday, February 6 from 1:00 PM-2:00 PM CST in a hybrid format to form policy positions on pertinent legislation. We will likely be joined by TDEC Deputy Director of Field Operations Evan Spann.

Please contact [RJ Gibson](#) for more information.

LBMC

**FAMILY OF
COMPANIES**

Social From the Capitol



News and Notes....

--TNECD Transportation Network Growth Opportunity. [\[MORE\]](#)

--A Trader Joe's is coming to Murfreesboro, TN. [\[MORE\]](#)

--Why Tennessee ranks among top ten states to start a business in 2024. [\[MORE\]](#)

--Nashville Then: 50 years ago in January 1974. [\[MORE\]](#)

--Nashville reveals preliminary East Bank plans as development negotiations continue. [\[MORE\]](#)

--TDOT Launches Pothole Repairs after Winter Storm. [\[MORE\]](#)

--December Revenues. [\[MORE\]](#)

--Gov. Lee to Deliver Sixth State of the State Address on February 5. [\[MORE\]](#)

--Unemployment Holds Steady During Final Month of 2023. [\[MORE\]](#)

--Emery Named Director of Pick Tennessee Products Program. [\[MORE\]](#)

