

The 2009 session of the NC General Assembly convened on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at noon. No surprises with the opening festivities. Sen. Basnight will continue to be President Pro Tem of the Senate, and Speaker Joe Hackney will again preside in the House. Governor Bev Perdue is, of course, no longer presiding over the Senate. That job has gone to newly elected Lt. Governor Walter Dalton.

Committees have yet to be appointed or to meet. However, one bill of interest on the P&C front has already been introduced. Sen. Julia Boseman (D-Wilmington) introduced SB 6, which would impose a stay on the increases in deductibles and surcharges approved by the Commissioner for Beach and FAIR Plan policies. It has been referred to Senate Commerce.

Enclosed, also on the P&C front, is the Final Report of the Study Committee which examined the impact of hurricanes on the ability of the Beach and FAIR Plans to pay claims. Insurers and the DOI differ on how much exposure companies should have, and the legislature will have some tough issues before them.

All session long the budget will be a huge issue. LTC tax credits may prove to be a challenge in this environment. Look for STOLI to come front and center before too long.

DOI news. Commissioner Long suffered a serious stroke on Jan. 21. The few reports that I've received indicate that his condition is serious. Barbara Morales Burke will be leaving the DOI to go with Blue Cross, and Louis Belo will be taking over her duties.

The Health Insurance High Risk Pool is open for business. Remember that as a resource for your clients who may need it.

That's it for now. It'll take a week or so for things to heat up at the General Assembly. I'll keep you posted, and, as always, would welcome your questions or insights at any time.

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