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State introduces many new bills

BY DAVID BEARD The Dominion Post

CHARLESTON — Here's a glimpse of some bills introduced Wednesday and Thursday at the Capitol.

Senate bills

SB 303 adds captive cervids — deer and elk — to the list of animals “protected from dogs which can result in the authorized killing of a dog by one observing a dog chasing or harming the identified animal.” Sen. Bob Williams, D-Taylor, is lead sponsor; Sen. Dave Sypolt, R-Preston, is a co-sponsor.

SB 305 enables counties or municipalities to undertake a referendum and thereafter levy a tax on the restaurant sale of food and beverages; money raised would be used locally.

SB 314 creates a Natural Gas Resources Transportation Road System to regulate Marcellus gas drilling traffic on state roads.

SB 315 designates \$10 million from the Excess Lottery Fund to pay for high school and middle school athletics.

SB 321 is another of the bills mandating insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders. Kessler is lead sponsor; Sen. Larry Edgell, D-Wetzel, is among the co-sponsors.

SB 328, among other things, bans texting by commercial motorvehicle drivers.

House bills

HB 2852, a twin to SB 272 introduced earlier this week, is intended to expand the state tax increment financing (TIF) program. TIF districts allow governing bodies to sell development bonds based on projected property tax growth in a designated area.

The bill would allow Class III and IV municipalities to create TIF districts, and would add remediation of landfills, former mine sites and solid waste or hazardous waste sites — in order to facilitate economic development — to the list of eligible projects.

HB 2878 is the twin to SB 258, introduced earlier this week — the 100-page Hydraulic Fracturing and Horizontal Gas Drilling Act. It's one of two Marcellus bills that will work their way through the Legislature. The other comes from the Department of Environmental Protection. Marion Delegates Tim Manchin and Mike Caputo, Monongalia Delegate Barbara Evans Fleischauer and Taylor Delegate Mike Manypenny are among the sponsors.

HB 2888 strengthens whistleblower protections for mine workers. Monongalia Delegate Charlene Marshall and Marion Delegates Caputo and Linda Longstreth are among the sponsors.

HB 2889 is the Jason Flatt Act, requiring educators and service personnel to obtain suicide prevention education; a carryover from last year. Marshall, Caputo and Mon Delegates Barbara Evans Fleischauer and Tony Barill are among the sponsors.

HB 2890 allows a tax credit for residents or businesses “placing in service” an energy-efficient building. Delegate Tim Manchin, D-Marion, is one of two sponsors.

HB 2894 creates a 1 percent fire and casualty insurance surcharge dedicated to volunteer and part-volunteer fire departments. Taylor Delegate Mike Manypenny is among the sponsors.