

Lobbying

From A1

the spending supported his policies.

“With the election of President Donald Trump in the fall of 2024 and a new administration with



McGowan

a renewed focus and emphasis on fiscal responsibility through the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), there is uncertainty regarding the status of these

water infrastructure investments,” McGowan wrote in the position paper. “Nevertheless, we respectfully urge our tri-state Congressional delegation to aggressively pursue meaningful and substantive federal funding for the projected \$470 million Sioux City wastewater plant investment. As one of the leading food processing communities in the nation, the importance of investing in the infrastructure of this facility, as a means to protect our national food supply, simply cannot be overstated.”

McGowan has repeatedly warned that the cost of the project will fall heavily on residential users, because, he says, industrial users will build their own systems



TIM HYNDS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Ongoing construction work is shown at Sioux City’s wastewater treatment plant on Thursday.

to treat their wastewater, thus cutting their use of the plant and their monthly share of the bill.

185th’s future at stake

In 2003, the 185th transitioned from the relatively small, light-weight F-16 Fighting Falcon to the extremely heavy KC-135 Stratotanker. The latter functions essentially as a flying gas station, used to

refuel military aircraft in mid-air. (It was during this time that the 185th was re-designated as the Air Refueling Wing; before that it was the 185th Fighter Wing.)

As part of that transition, the Pentagon pledged the 185th would get the infrastructure upgrades necessary to support the weight and size of the KC-135. That promise was mothballed

amid the upheaval of the War on Terror, as the military prioritized other projects.

McGowan has stressed, repeatedly, the unfulfilled-promise aspect of the 185th situation.

“This is a request to fulfill a funding commitment that was made two decades ago, during the conversion from one aircraft to another,” he said last April.

Due to the state of disrepair of the base’s infrastructure, the KC-135s have not been able to take off with a full load of fuel from Sioux City, limiting the effectiveness of the 185th as a fighting unit.

Runway work completed in 2022 will extend the lifespan of the runway to 2027, after which the runway may become unusable and the base itself could face closure.

Schedule

The 70th annual Siouxland/Washington Conference begins Wednesday morning and wraps up Thursday evening. Over 40 local leaders are signed up for the trip. The local delegation will meet with members the tri-state congressional delegation, as well as a handful of military, intelligence and think-tank people.

Barbara Sloniker, executive vice president of the Chamber, said Thursday afternoon she had made requests for the group to with administration officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, the former governor of South Dakota. As of that time she hadn’t heard from Noem’s office or any other cabinet-level officials.

The Chamber’s agenda includes a number of other priorities, from increasing the local workforce to reauthorizing the Farm Bill.

The Journal’s Dave Dreeszen has contributed to this story.

Funeral

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he recounted Francis’ constant concern for migrants, exemplified by celebrating Mass at the U.S.-Mexico border and traveling to a refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece, and bringing 12 migrants home with him.

“The guiding thread of his mission was also the conviction that the church is a home for all, a home with its doors always open,” Re said, noting that with his travels, the Argentine pontiff reached “the most peripheral of the peripheries of the world.”

Despite Francis’ focus on the powerless, the powerful were out in force at his funeral. U.S. President Donald Trump and former President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer joined Prince William and continental European royals leading more than 160 official delegations. Argentine President Javier Milei had pride of place given Francis’ nationality, even if the two didn’t particularly get along and the pope alienated many in his homeland by never returning there.

In an extraordinary development, Trump and Zelenskyy met privately on the sidelines of the funeral.

A photo showed the two men sitting alone, facing one another and hunched over on chairs in St. Peter’s Basilica, where Francis often preached the need for a peaceful end to Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Francis choreographed the funeral himself when he revised and simplified the Vatican’s rites and rituals last year. His aim was to emphasize the pope’s role as a mere pastor and not “a powerful man of this world.”

It was a reflection of Francis’ 12-year project to radically reform the papacy, to stress priests as servants and to construct “a poor church for the poor.” He articulated the mission just days after his 2013 election and it explained the name he chose as

pope, honoring St. Francis of Assisi “who had the heart of the poor of the world,” according to the official decree of the pope’s life that was placed in his coffin before it was sealed Friday night.

The white facade of St. Peter’s glowed pink as the sun rose Saturday and throngs of mourners rushed into the square to get a spot for the Mass. Giant television screens were set up along the surrounding streets for those who couldn’t get close.

Police helicopters whirled overhead, part of the massive security operation Italian authorities mounted, including more than 2,500 police, 1,500 soldiers and a torpedo ship off the coast, Italian media reported.

Many mourners had planned to be in Rome anyway this weekend for the now-postponed Holy Year canonization of the first millennial saint, Carlo Acutis. Groups of scouts and youth church groups nearly outnumbered the gaggles of nuns and seminarians.

“He was a very charismatic pope, very human, very kind, above all very human,” said Miguel Vaca, a pilgrim from Peru who said he had camped out all night near the piazza. “It’s very emotional to say goodbye to him.”

Francis, the first Latin American and first Jesuit pope, died Easter Monday at age 88 after suffering a stroke while recovering from pneumonia.

Energy

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on non-participating customers.

■ Would require regulated electric utility companies to file a report every five years detailing the company’s energy supply and expected future demand.

■ Would change the state’s Energy Infrastructure Revolving Loan Program to the Energy and Water Infrastructure Revolving Loan Program, add water infrastructure to eligible projects for the fund to support, and place the program under the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

During those January remarks, Reynolds touted Iowa’s existing energy portfolio — including renewable energy and fuel sources — and competitive electricity prices relative to other states. She also said the state must look to future energy needs as the world becomes more dependent upon technology like artificial intelligence.

Reynolds said that means a focus on nuclear energy and an “all-of-the-above” energy portfolio that ensures Iowa has a stable electrical grid “regardless of whether it’s hot, cold, windy, or cloudy.”

“We want to send a message to businesses: Invest in Iowa, and you won’t regret it. You’ll have the workforce, the energy infrastructure, and the low cost of doing business to compete with any company in the world,” Reynolds said during her address.

“As our nation prepares for increased energy demand in the years to come, (Reynolds) is encouraging a mix of energy resources to ensure Iowa remains a leader in cheap, reliable energy for customers,” Reynolds spokesman Mason Mauro said this week in a statement to The Gazette.

Right of first refusal sparks debate

The bill’s right of first refusal provision — commonly referred to by its acronym ROFR — has created a debate not just inside the Iowa Capitol, but between Reynolds’ administration and President Donald Trump’s.

A U.S. Department of Justice antitrust official appointed by Trump, responding to an inquiry from a pair of Iowa Republican legislators, warned in a March letter that the provision would stifle competition and potentially raise prices and lower the quality of service for Iowa electricity customers.

Reynolds said she shares Trump’s goals for energy production and that the right of first refusal provision “is the most effective way to ensure that federally registered transmission line projects are built efficiently and reliably.”

Dusky Terry, president of the energy company ITC Midwest, said there is no proof that right of first refusal laws lead to higher energy costs for consumers. Terry said that ever since a 2011 federal regulatory rule change that ended



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MidAmerican Energy project manager John Marshall gestures towards inverter that converts direct current generated by solar panels to alternating current before sending it to the electrical grid at the company’s solar energy facility at the Port Neal industrial complex south of Sioux City in a Feb. 8, 2022 file photo.

national ROFR requirements but allowed states to enact their own, transmission project savings have not been realized.

Legislative movement stalled

Momentum to get the bill passed through the Iowa Legislature — so Reynolds could sign it into law — appears to have stalled in recent weeks at the Iowa Capitol.

Reynolds’ proposal was introduced in the form of twin bills, one each in the Iowa House and Senate. The House bill, House File 834, passed the first two legislative steps in mid-February when it was approved by a three-member legislative subcommittee and then the

full House Commerce Committee. It was then moved to the tax policy Ways and Means Committee, where it has languished.

The Senate bill, Senate File 585, passed a five-member subcommittee in mid-February and the full Senate Commerce Committee in early March. It was then moved to the Senate budget committee, where it passed another, three-member subcommittee on March 31. It has not been taken up by the full budget committee.

Iowa House Speaker Pat Grassley, a Republican from New Hartford who helps set the agenda in the Republican-majority chamber, recently said his colleagues have been discussing the bill. He said the fact that the Trump administration

weighed in on the right of first refusal provision drew the attention of some House Republicans.

“I think from our perspective, where we stand, we want to see Iowa have a more certain future in our energy policy. I think right now, we’re lacking that,” Grassley said.

Iowa Rep. Jennifer Konfrst, a Democrat from Windsor Heights who leads the minority-party House Democrats, earlier this month said she has heard concerns about the right of first refusal and resource planning provisions in the bill. Konfrst said she also believes the debate over the bill has been politicized, and that she cannot get a clear answer as to whether the provisions would lower energy costs for Iowans.

The companies and groups registered in support of the proposal include energy companies like MidAmerican, Alliant, Black Hills and ITC Midwest; statewide organizations representing electricity cooperatives and developers; labor unions that represent electrical and construction workers; and the Iowa Farm Bureau, according to state lobbying records.

The groups registered in opposition to the proposal include environmental groups, Americans for Prosperity, and energy companies that would like to construct and maintain transmission lines in Iowa.

Iowa legislators are expected to conclude their work for the 2025 session sometime in May.



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