
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: BOYD
SUBJECT: AUDIT PRIVILEGE/LEAD-BASED PAINT PROGRAM
DATE: NOVEMBER 25, 2002
CC: RENICK

As you will recall, Jimmy Palmer (EPA) notified the State that the Lead-Based Paint Program delegation will be withdrawn on December 24th if EPA's concerns regarding the audit privilege statute are not addressed. In meeting with Nunnelee and Ellington, I am convinced that the Lt. Governor will NOT send a letter to Palmer seeking delay of the deadline.

According to Nunnelee, the Lt. Governor believes that this is an executive problem not a legislative problem and it is not before them. To further complicate matters, the Lt. Governor will not likely sign a joint letter from her and Speaker Ford.

Nunnelee has agreed to go back to the Lt. Governor to secure a letter for Palmer. Ellington has agreed to get a separate letter from Speaker Ford with similar language to the Lt. Governor's letter. I have not seen a draft from either side.

Given the political situation under the dome, I am not convinced that any compromise can be worked out. Jamie Franks (with Holland and McCoy) is leading a group of House members who want to end privilege altogether. Nunnelee has clearly stated that this is unacceptable and will kill the bill in committee.

Where do go from here?

1. Contact the Speaker and Lt. Governor again regarding the status of their action and negotiations among the House and Senate.
2. Meet with key business leaders (i.e., Mississippi Power, Entergy, Howard) to present the issue and push them to raise the issue with the Speaker and Lt. Governor. Lead-based paint is the first of several programs Palmer outlined would be withdrawn.
3. Obtain a letter from the Speaker first to force the Lt. Governor's hand where she must either send a letter or become the blame for losing the program.

What are your thoughts?