

Senate Democrats finished their proposed state budget yesterday, a couple weeks after the House approved its spending plan.

Under the Senate's plan, two "temporary" taxes will expire. While this will lower taxes, the Senate will have to borrow almost three times what the House agreed upon for state and university construction projects. The \$20 billion spending plan for the fiscal year is \$263 million lower than the House budget because the Senate wants to eliminate a quarter-penny on the sales tax and set a higher income tax bracket for the state's top wage-earners. The Senate budget left out money to help counties with Medicaid, although senators say they will try to find a long-term solution before they adjourn for the year. The House's proposal included \$100 million in one-time money to give counties such relief. While the budget passed three Senate committees yesterday, House votes are expected today.