

It's hard to believe but session is right around the corner. We've spent months working on nearly 30 interim studies, two joint studies with the House and several task forces. These meetings give us some insight as to what issues we can expect to be working on in 2012. One study dealt with state tax credits.

The idea behind these is that they'll spur far more economic development through the creation of jobs, goods and services than their initial cost, which helps grow our state's tax base. Unfortunately, not all tax credits produce the economic results originally expected, so legislators have been going through them to decide which ones to keep and which to get rid of. A joint House and Senate committee has also been working on developing a long-term water plan for the state. This study has been touted as one of the most important undertaken in the history of the Legislature.

Certainly, it's one of the most complicated. They're dealing with multiple legal jurisdictions—state and federal regulations and law as well as issues of tribal sovereignty. The bottom line is no living thing can survive without water. This issue was driven home to farmers and ranchers across the state during last summer's devastating heat wave and drought.

Beyond that, having sufficient water throughout the state is critical for economic development, whether insuring adequate supplies for population growth, manufacturing, energy, agricultural needs, tourism or recreation. A study has been probing the impact on the state of the Federal Health Care

Law, which is being challenged by 26 states, including Oklahoma, and will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. Whether Oklahoma takes any additional legislative action regarding the federal law may well depend upon the outcome of this challenge. Transportation will also be a big issue as we continue to work to fix our roads and

bridges. Earlier this fall Governor Fallin announced a plan to target the state's bad bridges, which have been named as among the worst in the nation. Finally, we'll

be working to address problems in the state's foster care system. We've had numerous incidents where DHS has removed children from homes and placed them in foster homes

where they were harmed. We've also had situations where kids were left with their biological parents and were harmed or killed even though DHS had plenty of warning signs that the children might be in danger. Clearly, it's impossible to predict the outcome of every single intervention and every single placement, but the death of one innocent child is far too many. Oklahoma has a moral responsibility to do a better job of protecting our most vulnerable citizens. Besides those bills introduced in my committees, I'll also be focusing on the nearly 30 bills I'll be filing this session. These measures deal with a number of topics including lifetime victim protective orders, the sex offender registry, county planning and zoning, exotic animals, and energy hedging. I'll also be working on legislation on state contracts, child care licensing, child abuse and neglect, the GRDA, and income tax checkoffs among other things. One of the most important bills I'll be filing, especially for our area, deals with pseudoephedrine. My bill will require a prescription to get the tablet form of pseudoephedrine. I believe this will help slow the spread of meth labs and the sale of this dangerous drug. Taxpayers are forced to pay for the expensive cleanup of these labs so not only will this bill help save lives, it'll also save taxpayers' money. In the coming weeks, I'll be discussing these various measures. After the bill filing deadline in January, you'll be able to read these measures on our website (www.oksenate.gov). I'm so pleased to have been named the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. This subcommittee determines the budgets of 12 state agencies including DHS, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, the Department of Health and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Last year, we allocated nearly \$2 billion to these agencies that are responsible for protecting the health and well-being of some of state's most vulnerable citizens. It's imperative that we be as efficient with our state resources for these agencies as we can while ensuring that the needs of Oklahomans are being met. Our bill filing deadline is Thursday, Jan. 19. Session will then get

started on Monday, Feb. 6. I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year! I welcome and appreciate any comments or questions you might have for me. At the State Senate, I can be reached by writing to Senator Kim David, State Capitol, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd. Room 428B, Oklahoma City, OK 73105, emailing me at david@oksenate.gov, or by calling (405) 521-5590 and speaking to my assistant Gayla Guinn.