

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



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AG ANNOUNCES PROGRESS OF LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

Bills on synthetic drugs and metal theft are moving through Alabama Legislature

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced the progress of bills in his legislative package so far, noting in particular bills about synthetic drugs and metal theft that are moving through the Alabama Legislature.

Attorney General Strange said he is pleased with the quick action taken by both the House and the Senate on legislation to ban synthetic drugs. House Bill 158 and its companion, Senate Bill 208 are often referred to as the “spice” bill. Although the Senate and House each has approved its own “spice” bill, one version will have to be approved by both the Senate and the House before its final approval is achieved.

“This legislation is vital for public health and safety,” said Attorney General Strange. “When easy availability over store counters was endangering the people of Alabama, we took action with the State Department of Public Health to regulate and fight these dangerous substances. Now we need the power of this law to give officers better tools to combat this threat and to provide strong penalties for offenders. Our citizens can be proud of the leadership by the sponsors of this important measure, Representatives Allen Farley and Randy Wood, and Senator Arthur Orr.”

HB 158 & SB 208 regulates synthetic marijuana and other similar substances. Synthetic substances that mimic marijuana or other drugs, often referred to as "spice," "bath salts" or various other names, are being created with chemical compounds which had not been identified and prohibited as controlled substances under state law. The State Department of Public Health previously has taken regulatory action regarding this, and now the classification of the chemicals and chemical compounds as controlled substances under state law would give law enforcement stronger tools to combat their abuse.

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The Legislature also has acted upon Senate Bill 35 to fight metal theft. The Senate gave its approval to the bill, which still needs to pass through the House of Representatives. Senate Bill 35 arises from The Metal Theft Task Force, organized in 2011 to develop legislation to deal with the increasingly widespread theft of copper and other metals. Members of the coalition include manufacturers, secondary recyclers, business, law enforcement, church leaders, and others who have been impacted metal theft. This legislation will strengthen existing law by creating a statewide digital database, increasing criminal penalties, putting limits on cash transactions and many other safeguards.

“I commend Sen. Ben Brooks and Rep. Cam Ward for their dedication in sponsoring this legislation to combat metal theft,” said Attorney General Strange. “This is a crime that strikes against many throughout our society to crime, damaging and destroying the personal property of our citizens, small businesses, churches, and others.”

Additional bills in the legislative package advocated by Attorney General Strange that are pending action propose better ways to fight illegal gambling, protect citizens from false legal documents and sham legal proceedings, preserve law enforcement benefits, to combat looting, and regarding disarming of law enforcement officers.