



August 23, 2013

[SB 25](#) (Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento) expands mandatory mediation from labor agreement negotiations where the parties cannot reach agreement to all future negotiations. Unionization would be imposed on unsuspecting agricultural employees years, even decades, after an initial vote certification. It could create the situation where the newly unionized employees never actually voted to be unionized. SB 25 was approved by the Assembly on a 43-25 vote with 10 abstentions. Assembly members that abstained were: Luis Alejo (D-Salinas); Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo); Ken Cooley (D-Rancho Cordova); Steve Fox (D-Palmdale); Jim Frazier (D-Oakley); Marc Levine (D-San Rafael); Bill Quirk (D-Hayward); Rudy Salas (D-Bakersfield); and Mariko Yamada (D-Davis). SB 25 now goes back to the Senate for concurrence in amendments made by the Assembly, then to Governor Brown for his signature or veto. Farm Bureau is opposed.

[SB 485](#) (Ron Calderon, D-Montebello) would give County Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers the authority to inspect the records of junk dealers and recyclers and issue citations if they are found to be in violation of the law. It also allows an additional \$500 fee to be charged to cover the costs of these inspections. The intent of this bill is to ensure that recyclers and junk dealers are complying with current law and hold the proper permits to operate their businesses. There is a proliferation of “illegal” recyclers and this bill will help stop those activities. SB 485 was placed on the Assembly Appropriations Committee’s suspense file this week. Farm Bureau supports.

[AB 199](#) (Chris Holden, D-Pasadena) which encourages state institutions to purchase California grown agricultural products was approved by the Senate Governmental Organization Committee on a 7-0 vote. Originally, the bill required state institutions to purchase California grown agricultural products as long as the price was within five percent of out of state agricultural products. However, state institutions raised concerns in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and the bill was narrowed to only require the purchase to the extent possible. Farm Bureau supports.

[AB 904](#) (Wes Chesbro, D-Arcata) would create a Working Forest Management Plan, allowing timber landowners with up to 15,000 acres the ability to create a long term management plan. In return for giving up their right to use even-aged timber management they would be able to harvest without going through the timber harvest permitting process. This program would be similar to the existing Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan for timber landowners with less than 2,500 acres. The Senate Appropriations Committee heard AB 904 this week and placed it on its suspense file. Farm Bureau supports.

[AB 1394](#) (Assembly Insurance Committee) authorizes the State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF) to have four additional exempt positions. It also establishes SCIF as a quasi-state agency for the purpose of transacting workers' compensation insurance both competitively in the market and as the insurer of last

resort for California businesses that require coverage but cannot obtain that coverage from private insurers. AB 1394 was approved by the Senate on a 37-0 vote and is on its way to the Governor. Farm Bureau supports.

AB 763 by Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo) will designate the Department of Boating and Waterways as the lead agency to work in cooperation with other agencies for the control of invasive aquatic plants in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Early detection and rapid response is essential for the treatment, control and eventual eradication of any invasive species. Aggressive aquatic plants have already greatly impacted the health of this important water system. The recent amendments provided clear policy that will give the Department of Boating and Waterways the necessary authority to prevent further damaging spread of invasive aquatic plants in the Delta, its tributaries and the Suisun Marsh. AB 763 is on the Suspense file in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and will be heard on August 30. Farm Bureau supports.

AB 8 (Henry Perea, D-Fresno and Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley) continues the authority through 2023 to fund several air quality improvement programs. They include the Carl Moyer Program, widely used by the agricultural community, and the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Programs. AB 8 was approved on a 9-2 vote in the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee and the following day in the Senate Environmental Committee on an 8-1 vote. AB 8 will be heard on 8/26 in the Senate Appropriations Committee. SB 11 (Anthony Cannella, R-Ceres and Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) is basically the same bill and was placed on suspense in Assembly Appropriations Committee. Farm Bureau supports.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's Nitrogen Tracking and Reporting System Task Force will meet August 28th and 29th at the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board in Rancho Cordova. CDFG convened the task force in accordance with the State Water Resources Control Board's recommendations to the Legislature in February to address high nitrate levels in groundwater. The report includes 15 specific recommendations. Recommendation 11 stated: "*CDFG, in coordination with the Water Boards, should convene a Task Force to identify intended outcomes and expected benefits of a nitrogen mass balance tracking system in nitrate high-risk areas. The Task Force should identify appropriate nitrogen tracking and reporting systems, and potential alternatives, that would provide meaningful and high quality data to help better protect groundwater quality.*" The report is available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nitrate_project/index.shtml.

Farm Bureau is represented on the task force and is actively advocating for reasonable recommendations. A final report of findings to determine potential alternatives and methods to implement a nitrogen tracking and reporting system are expected to be complete by the end of September.

SB 1 (Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento), which would reinstitute the Community Redevelopment Law under a different name but with no farmland protections, was sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee's Suspense File on August 21st. The measure is very likely to come off Suspense next week but may be amended to provide a modicum of protection for the state's agricultural land. Farm Bureau is opposed to SB 1 for several reasons, not the least of which is that we vehemently oppose the taking of private property for a private business development.