



April 13, 2018

“State of the State” of Agriculture

California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary, Karen Ross, and U.C. Agriculture and Natural Resources Vice President, Glenda Humiston, presented to the Assembly Agriculture Committee on the current state of California agriculture, focusing on water, pest management, climate change and adaptation, and agricultural technology (automation and education).

Agriculture, Generally

Assemblywoman Caballero’s (D-Salinas) California Farm Bill ([AB 2166](#)) was heard and passed in the Assembly Committee on Agriculture. Upon passage, the AB 2166 was referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee. AB 2166 would require the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to develop a model Agricultural Business and Technology Program, requires the County Agriculture commissioners to also conduct a survey of internet accessibility in their county to identify gaps in internet accessibility on farms, establishes the Agriculture Growth Council to plan for regulatory streamlining for the agricultural industry, creates a tax credit for deployment of agricultural technology, and appropriates specified amounts from California’s General Fund for various agriculture related programs with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the University of California. *Staff contact: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com or Robert Spiegel, rspiegel@cfbf.com, 916-446-4647.*

Energy & Utilities

AB 920 (Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, D-Napa and Eduardo Garcia, D-Coachella) This bill addresses biomass generation facilities to provide some certainty about their use as a resource in the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard. The bill will be heard in the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy on April 18. AB 920, as currently drafted, would require that not less than 25% of the additional generation acquired be met with renewable grid-balancing generation, which includes biomass and geothermal, until either 20% of the total electricity products acquired to satisfy the overall renewable requirements are from renewable grid-balancing generation or December 31, 2030, whichever occurs first. The bill would require a specified portion of this increment to be procured from the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resources Area. Amendments are anticipated to be made in the Committee, but it is not yet known how extensive they will be.

Like Aguiar-Curry’s biomass bill from last year, there is broad support for the bill. Also like last year there is opposition from competing renewable generation sources – wind energy and solar. CFBF is in support. *Staff contact: Karen Mills, kmills@cdbf.com (916) 446-4647.*

Depredation

Farmers and ranchers whose property is damaged by wild pigs would no longer need a depredation permit to take those pigs if [AB 2805](#) (Frank Bigelow, R-O'Neals) becomes law. There has been extended discussion by both the legislature and the Fish and Game Commission in recent years on how to improve the management of wild pigs and reduce their negative impacts on both public and private lands in California. AB 2805 is based on the outcome of these discussions and works to address the concerns of landowners, hunters, and other interested groups. Farm Bureau is supportive of the effort and will work to ensure that the elimination of the depredation permit requirement remains in the bill. The Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee heard AB 2805 this week and passed it with a 14-0 vote, despite opposition from some hunting groups who do not want to see any reduction in the wild pig population. The bill now goes to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. *Staff contact: Noelle Cremers, ncremers@cxbf.com or (916) 446-4647.*

Forestry

[AB 2889](#) (Caballero, D – Salinas), which would create the Timber Harvest Plan (THP) submitters' "Bill of Rights" has been referred to the Assembly Natural Resources Committee and will be heard in the committee on April 23. The California Farm Bureau Federation is one of 17 organizations in support of the legislation. *Staff contact: Robert Spiegel, rspiegel@cxbf.com or (916)446-4647.*

California Farm Bureau is also supporting [AB 2518](#) (Aguiar-Curry, D- Winters), which would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL-FIRE) to explore markets for the expansion of innovative forest products and mass timber. This legislation builds upon Senate Bill 859 (2016) which required the California Natural Resources Agency to "establish a working group on expanding wood product markets that can utilize woody biomass, especially biomass that is removed from high hazard zones" and "submit recommendations to the Legislature on actions that may be taken to encourage the development of the wood product markets, including the identification of potential pilot projects". AB 2518 is an effort to promote forest-products and biomass utilization which could help bring new economic prosperity to California's rural economies. This legislation should also facilitate an increase in-state manufacturing and in the demand for California's wood products, particularly those products produced from woody biomass. *Staff contact: Robert Spiegel, rspiegel@cxbf.com or (916)446-4647.*

Of significant interest recently was the introduction of [SB 1414](#) (Beall, D – San Jose). Specifically, SB 1414 would require the San Jose Water Company to conduct three public hearings on a Timber Harvest Plan (THP), authorizes the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District to publicly review the THP and then requires a resolution from this non-regulatory entity certifying that the THP would result in no significant impacts to public lands. The bill further requires public hearings conducted by Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties, and the regional water quality control board.

SB 1414 would establish a new and dangerous precedent for all THPs. This bill would require numerous public forums and would extend a "veto" like authority to a non-regulatory entity. Existing law already provides a CEQA-equivalent review process for all THPs that requires review by multiple state regulatory agencies and the opportunity for extensive public comment. There also exists separate rules for different forest districts in California based upon unique biological, topographical and climatic characteristics. Of greatest concern to Farm Bureau is the potential for this new framework to be replicated and misused against other private land owners in instances where timber operations may be unpopular with the public. A letter of opposition from the California Farm Bureau Federation has been submitted to Senator Beall

and to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water. SB 1414 is scheduled to be heard on Tuesday, April 24, 2018. *Staff contact: Robert Spiegel, rspiegel@cfbf.com or (916) 446-4647.*

Taxation

The Assembly Appropriations Committee heard AB 2008 (Salas, D- Bakersfield), which would ensure that farmers and ranchers are not taxed on money they receive through the Carl Moyer engine replacement program. Due to the legislation's significant costs, the Assembly Appropriations Committee has placed the bill on its Suspense File, to which the committee sends any bill with an annual cost of more than \$150,000. Suspense File bills are then considered at one hearing after the state budget has been prepared and the committee has a better sense of available revenue. *Staff contact: Robert Spiegel, rspiegel@cfbf.com or (916) 446-4647.*

Nutrition

California was a grant recipient for the federal Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program in 2016-17, which provides funding to incentivize the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at certified farmers' markets and retail outlets by food insecure populations. To build off California's success, Assembly member Phil Ting (D-San Francisco) has introduced [AB 2335](#) which would expand eligible retail outlets to include community-supported agriculture programs (CSAs) and farm stands. The bill also proposes to establish a pilot program in four counties (L.A., Alameda, San Francisco and San Diego) to fund the purchase of refrigeration units for small businesses and corner stores to sell California-grown produce. Farm Bureau expressed concern that these "pilot projects" do not include any inland or rural communities, who notably suffer from more severe food insecurity rates and have a higher prevalence of food deserts. The bill was presented in Assembly Agriculture Committee, wherein which nearly all committee members echoed this sentiment. The Farm Bureau is working directly with Mr. Ting to ensure rural California is fairly represented. *Staff contact: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com, 916-446-4647.*

Cannabis

Assembly Agriculture committee hosted a lively debate about [AB 2810](#) (Marc Levine, D-Marin), which would establish a Sun-Grown Cannabis Commission under California's Marketing Act. Supporters argue that this bill would allow for the professionalization of the cannabis industry and provide a venue to establish industry-wide consistent product standards. Dissenters argued that the California Marketing Act was not intended to include non-agricultural commodities and that rather, this Commission would be engaged in product promotion, which may be counter to the State's obligation to protect the public from illicit products. The bill passed Assembly Agriculture Committee, with a commitment to also establish an Indoor Cannabis Commission, and is slated to be heard in Assembly Business and Professions Committee on April 24th. *Staff contact: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com, 916-446-4647.*

Land Use

The North Coast Rail Authority, established in 1989, was formed with the intention to continue rail service in Northwestern California from Cloverdale to Eureka (Mendocino and Humboldt Counties). Due to the lack of public funding for this scale of infrastructure, a majority of this rail line is no longer in service and land is used for alternative purposes (timber harvesting, etc.). In response, Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) has introduced [SB 1029](#) which would dissolve the North Coast Rail Authority, and bisect the existing North Coast Rail Authority rail line at the City of Willits, transferring the northernmost 150 miles to the Department of Transportation and a successor Trail Agency, and the southernmost 150 miles

to an unnamed entity. Both parties would perform railbanking and seek to create the Great Redwood Trail. The bill passed Senate Transportation and Housing Committee and is slated to be heard in Senate Natural Resources Committee on April 24th. Farm Bureau has been working with Senator McGuire, with the understanding that this bill is a ‘work in progress,’ but has expressed concern of the impacts to adjacent landholders, existing contracts, and financing. *Staff contact: Robert Speigel, rspeigel@cfbf.com and Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com, 916-446-4647.*

Water

The measure reported on last week that would circumvent the existing regulatory process for determining the water quality and safety of produced water for irrigation was pulled from hearing in the Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee this week by the author when it appeared the votes were not there to move the bill. [AB 2828](#) (Laura Friedman, D-Glendale) ignores years of work by farmers, landowners and agricultural irrigation districts, under the direction of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to conduct countless water quality and crop safety tests, all showing that produced water is a clean, safe and dependable water source. Farm Bureau, a coalition of agricultural organizations and irrigation districts are opposed to the measure. *Staff contact: Danny Merkley, 916-446-4647; dmerkley@cfbf.com*

The measure reported on last week that would trigger state actions to add a river to the state wild and scenic rivers system passed out of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee this week 6-3. [AB 2975](#) (Laura Friedman, D-Glendale) would require the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to take any necessary action to add the river or segment of a river to the state wild and scenic rivers system if the federal government delisted it from the national wild and scenic system. The measure will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Farm Bureau is opposed. *Staff contact: Danny Merkley, 916-446-4647; dmerkley@cfbf.com*