



May 13, 2011

A California Water Commission subcommittee made up of four commissioners reviewed draft agricultural water measurement regulations this week. The full commission will take up the matter May 18<sup>th</sup> and make recommendations to the Department of Water Resources Director. Farm Bureau has been actively engaged in the Agricultural Stakeholder Committee convened by the Department of Water Resources in 2010 to develop emergency regulations in accordance with [SBx7 7](#) (Darrel Steinberg, D-Sacramento). The regulations are intended to meet the requirements of the California Water Code requiring agricultural water suppliers to measure the volume of water delivered to customers with sufficient accuracy and adopt a pricing structure for water customers based at least in part on quantity delivered. Of particular concern in the draft regulations is the insistence that volumetric pricing must be implemented in all water districts and requirements to install and implement costly water measurement systems at the point of deliver to farmers that are not locally cost effective. Farm Bureau will advocate against these unrealistic and costly measures before the California Water Commission May 18<sup>th</sup>.

The Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee held a Delta Plan Oversight Hearing May 10<sup>th</sup>. Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird presented an overview of the progress and status of the Delta Plan and responded to questions from committee members. A five member panel then gave an update on Delta Governance and cited statutory requirements under [SBx7 1](#) (Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto). The panel included: Natural Resources Agency Deputy Secretary Jerry Meral, who discussed the Bay Delta Conservation Plan; Delta Stewardship Council Chair Phil Isenberg, speaking to the long-term management plan for the Delta (Delta Plan); State Water Resources Control Board Chief Deputy Director Caren Trgovcich, who addressed the Water Board's role in implementing the Delta Plan; Delta Protection Commission Executive Director Mike Machado, speaking about the Delta Economic Sustainability Plan; and Delta Conservancy Executive Officer Campbell Ingram, who spoke about the Delta Conservancy Strategic Plan. The hearing was informative to those that have not been following Delta governance activities and no surprises for those who have.

A measure that would authorize a district attorney, a city attorney of a city with a population that exceeds 750,000 to bring civil actions under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act was heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. [AB 246](#) (Bob Wieckowski, D-Fremont) passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee 12-4 along party lines. The measure is headed to the Assembly Floor. Farm Bureau is opposed.

A measure that would require local agencies to identify groundwater recharge areas, provide protections for those areas and require that maps be provided to local planning agencies was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee May 11<sup>th</sup>. The Committee analysis identified potentially millions in unknown costs to the Department of Water Resources to fund an increased number of local water agency efforts to

map groundwater recharge areas. Their analysis triggered [AB 359](#) (Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael) being held on the suspense file. Farm Bureau had a productive meeting with the author and sponsor of the measure this week and expects to remove opposition after receiving a verbal commitment to accept language to amend the bill.

[AB 1265](#) (Jim Nielsen, R-Gerber), which would reenact the programmatic provisions of SB 863 related to the 10 percent shorter Williamson Act contracts, was approved on the Assembly Agriculture Committee's consent calendar. The continued fast-tracking of the bill indicates that the Legislature wants to restore this landowner funded effort to save the Williamson Act. AB 1265 will also be on the consent calendar the Assembly Floor.

[SB 370](#) (Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo) which would authorize aggregation of meters for agricultural customer-generators was heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 9<sup>th</sup> and moved to the suspense file for the time being. The Committee analysis identified costs that the California Public Utilities Commission would incur to implement the legislation, which caused it to be moved to the suspense file. This bill would authorize an agricultural customer-generator with multiple meters to elect to aggregate the electrical load of the meters located on the property where the generation facility is located and on all property adjacent or contiguous to the property on which the generation facility is located, if those properties are solely owned by the agricultural customer-generator. CFBF is in support of the bill.

[AB 691](#) (Henry Perea, D-Fresno) was placed on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file this week. This bill would designate the Secretary of Food and Agriculture as ombudsman responsible for providing assistance to farmers and ranchers in obtaining permits from the state and provide input into the development of regulations impacting agriculture. The Appropriations Committee's analysis estimated costs in the several millions of dollars, which leads to the expectation that this bill will likely remain on suspense. CFBF is supporting AB 691.

The voters of California approved the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century, or Proposition 1A, at the general election held November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Act provides for the issuance of \$9.95 billion in general obligation bonds for high-speed rail. [AB 292](#) (Kathleen Galgiani, D-Tracy) was recently amended to require the High Speed Rail Authority to appoint an agricultural advisory committee to advise the Authority on the impact that the Authority's policies, plans and procedures will have on the agricultural community. This bill will enable those actively engaged in agriculture to have input into the issues raised by farmers and land owners in the Central Valley who have expressed the fear that the project would carve their property into useless pieces, disrupt their work, and drive down land values. AB 292 is on the Assembly Suspense file and will likely be heard on or before the May 27<sup>th</sup> deadline.

It is no surprise that [AB 950](#) by Assembly Speaker John Perez (D-Los Angeles) sailed out of the Labor and Employment Committee and went straight to the Assembly Floor, by-passing Assembly Appropriations on the guise that it will not have any fiscal impact to the state. This labor union sponsored bill will require any drayage truck operator to be an employee of the company who arranges for or engages their services and will effectively ban all independent contractors or owner-operators from California ports. Farm Bureau continues to work as a part of a large coalition of business, trucking and shipping associations in opposition to this bill.

The bill that has met with heated opposition by the American Council of Engineering Companies and the Professional Engineers in California Government was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee

Suspense file and will likely be heard on or before May 27 deadline. Current law gives civil engineers a monopoly over the engineering profession making them the only engineering discipline that can give project approval over all other engineers. SB 692 (Mimi Walters, R-Laguna Niguel) would allow all twelve recognized engineering disciplines to practice in their specialized fields if they have the education, experience and competence to practice. Farm Bureau is the sponsor.

Quagga and zebra mussels reproduce prolifically and once established are nearly impossible to eradicate. They are extremely invasive aquatic species that cause substantial economic and environmental damage once they infest a waterway, threatening municipal water supplies, agricultural irrigation, power plant operations, the steering and engines of boats and recreational equipment, they can also completely alter the ecological balance of entire water bodies once established. [SB 215](#) (Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar) is sponsored by the Association of California Water agencies and would extend the sunset date of the current law to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 that requires the owner or manager of a water storage reservoir, to develop and implement a monitoring and control program to prevent the introduction of invasive mussel species. Privately owned reservoirs, not open to the public are exempt. SB 215 was sent to the Senate Appropriation's Suspense file and will likely be heard on or before the May 27<sup>th</sup> deadline. Farm Bureau is in support.