



July 2, 2010

The Senate concurred in Assembly amendments and [SB 1229](#) (Jeff Denham, R-Merced) passed out of the Senate on a 36-0 vote. It is now headed to the Governor for his action. This bill provides a reasonable solution for farmers and ranchers who use ATVs in their operations by adding the vehicles to the vehicle code as implements of husbandry. The vehicles would have to be used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations, not for recreation, and driven for no more than a mile from point of origin. The vehicles would be limited to use on a two-lane road in order to qualify. Farm Bureau is in support.

[AB 2446](#) (Warren Furutani, D-Long Beach) passed out of the Senate Education Committee on a 5-1 vote and now goes to Senate Appropriations for determination of its fiscal impact to the state. This measure would add Career Technical Education (CTE) courses as an option for students to fulfill high school graduation requirements. The bill would provide students with additional educational and curricular options by recognizing that CTE is a valuable part of preparing students for their future careers. Farm Bureau is in support.

[SB 1121](#), legislation by Senator Dean Florez (D-Shafter) to impose an 8-hour work day on agricultural workers, passed the Assembly on a 47-28 vote. The bill now goes to the governor for his action sometime in the next couple of weeks. The measure will negatively impact farm workers due to the change in overtime rules for farm workers-- the bill would result in less flexibility and reduced hours for farm workers. Agricultural industry organizations including Farm Bureau are opposed to the bill and we are asking the governor for a veto of the measure.

The legislature took action on two bills trying to improve access to medical care in California's rural communities. [SB 726](#) (Roy Ashburn, R-Bakersfield) and [AB 646](#) (Sandre Swanson, D-Oakland) both seek to allow hospitals in medically underserved areas to hire physicians directly so that residents in these areas have access to health care. Currently there is a severe shortage of physicians in California's rural areas and CFBF supports these bills and other efforts to alleviate these shortages. SB 726 and AB 646 will help by allowing hospitals and health care districts to provide financial security to doctors by hiring them directly and ensuring a steady income. The Assembly passed SB 726, by a vote of 43-24 this week, which now returns to the Senate for concurrence. Unfortunately opposition by the California Medical Association and others stopped AB 646 from passing out of the Senate Business, Professions, and Economic Development Committee. CFBF appreciates Senators Negrete McLeod, Calderon, Correa, and Yee for voting in favor of AB 646, but unfortunately their votes weren't enough to pass the bill out of committee.

[SB 1303](#) (Lois Wolk, D-Linden) passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee on consent this week. This CFBF co-sponsored bill would continue the accidental take allowance for ongoing and routine agricultural activities under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Current law allows accidental take of species listed under CESA during routine and ongoing agricultural activities. This provision of law is set to expire January 1, 2011 and SB 1303 will allow that provision to continue. CFBF was able to obtain amendments that extend the sunset to January 1, 2014 in return for agreeing to create an outreach program to increase understanding within the agricultural community of accidental take and incidental take programs under CESA. CFBF is working with the California Cattlemen's Association on the bill, which has been placed on the Assembly floor consent calendar and will be taken up when the legislature returns.

[SB 1349](#) (Dave Cogdill, R-Fresno) passed out of the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee this week with a 13-0 vote. The bill gives the Department of Fish and Game the authority to allow incidental take of Chinook salmon reintroduced under the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), as long as they are classified as an experimental population by the National Marine Fisheries Service. This is necessary to provide protections to landowners impacted by the SJRRP. Under the SJRRP Chinook salmon will be reintroduced into the San Joaquin River and will be classified as an experimental population by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Without SB 1349, the California Endangered Species Act would prohibit take of these reintroduced salmon and private landowners could see restrictions impacting their farms and ranches. CFBF supports the bill, which now moves to the Appropriations Committee.

[AB 51](#) (Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo), which will allow agricultural customers with multiple electric service accounts to aggregate their accounts located on property adjacent or contiguous to the generation facility for the purposes of participating in net energy metering. By aggregating the electrical load of various accounts, it will be easier for agricultural customers to maximize the net energy production by allowing more flexibility with matching location of generation with load. AB 51 passed out of the Senate Energy Utilities and Communications Committee this week on a 6-0 vote. It will be heard next in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[AB 2336](#) (Jean Fuller, R-Bakersfield), was heard in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee this week. The measure would require the Delta Stewardship Council to assess the adverse impacts of invasive species on native species in the delta. In the course of developing and adopting the Delta Plan, the council would be required under this measure to evaluate predator suppression options in the delta and recommend changes in law and actions by state agencies. The measure was held in committee without a recommendation. Farm Bureau supports this measure.

[AB 2595](#) (Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael) was heard in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee this week. The bill would require a county agricultural commissioner to withhold the issuance of an operator identification number after notification from a regional water board that the operator of the property failed to obtain individual or general waste discharge requirements, or enroll in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, or comply with a Section 13267 order. The operator identification number can only be withheld after all administrative proceedings and appeals have been afforded the grower/operator. Farm Bureau and other agricultural interests worked to amend the bill substantially before it came over to the Senate. The measure passed out of committee 5 to 2 and has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. The environmental community is just now asking for amendments. Farm Bureau has a neutral position on the measure in its current form.

[AB 2483](#) (Joe Coto, D-San Jose) was also heard this week in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee. The measure would replace the current Santa Clara Valley Water District Act. Farm Bureau has been working closely with the Santa Clara County Farm Bureau, other agricultural organizations, and the author to address concerns. Significant amendments were made to the measure this week. Farm Bureau remains opposed unless amended.

[AB 2776](#) (Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael) was heard in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee this week. The bill would prohibit transfers of water or water rights from agricultural use to municipal use for a period of 20 years or more, unless the water user provides to the Department of Water Resources or the State Water Resources Control Board an evaluation of the economic, social, and environmental effects of the transfer to the area from which the water is to be transferred. The bill would prohibit a water user from replacing the surface water that is transferred with groundwater, unless the groundwater basin is monitored. The bill would require the department and the state board to charge specified fees to a water user that is subject to these provisions. The language in this measure mirrors AB 2049 (Juan Arambula, D-Fresno) that failed earlier this year. Farm Bureau has not taken a formal position.

[SB 565](#) (Fran Pavley, D-Santa Monica) was heard in the Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee this week. The bill would give the State Water Board the authority to require surface water diverters to perform expensive studies evaluating the effect of their diversions on the environment, to establish fines at the highest market value of water in the region and to evaluate each diverter's ability to pay. The language in this bill failed to get off the Senate Floor twice last year, was successfully amended and negotiated out of the 2009 Comprehensive Water Package last year. The measure passed out of the committee 7 to 6. Farm Bureau is opposed.