



Farm Bureau at work

California Farm Bureau's government affairs team is at the Capitol, advocating for farmers, ranchers and agriculture's future. Here are some key issues Farm Bureau is focused on this week.

May 20, 2022

BUDGET

Gasoline Tax Relief Check In: As previously discussed, the Newsom administration in January with the release of the initial budget proposal suggested gas tax relief. The Governor's proposal calls for \$9 billion in tax refunds to Californians in the form of \$400 direct payments per vehicle, capped at two vehicles. This package also provides \$2 billion in broader relief including:

- \$750 million in incentive grants to transit and rail agencies to provide free transit for Californians for 3 months. As a result, roughly 3 million Californians per day who take the bus, subway, or light rail won't have to pay a fare every time they ride.
- Up to \$600 million to pause a part of the sales tax rate on diesel for one year.
- \$523 million to pause the inflationary adjustment to gas and diesel excise tax rates.

The package also calls for \$500 million in active transportation for projects that promote biking and walking throughout the state. Additionally, this proposal fast-tracks a \$1.75 billion portion of the Governor's \$10 billion ZEV investments - in more ZEV passenger vehicles and building more charging infrastructure throughout the state – especially in low-income communities.

While Assembly member Kiley's gas tax bill was dramatically hijacked while moving through the Assembly policy process, there still is not consensus between the administration and the legislature on how to best provide Californians with some relief. Senate leader Toni Atkins and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon have opposed any type of gas tax suspension or relief tied to gasoline, favoring their "Better for Families Rebate" of a general tax refund of \$200 to each taxpayer, and \$200 additionally for each dependent but with income limitations of \$250,000 for joint filers, or under \$125,000 in individual earnings. However, a group of moderate Democrats and Republicans called the Problem Solvers Caucus introduced a new proposal, which comes as other legislative efforts like Kiley's have stalled. It would fully suspend the 51.1 cent excise tax on each gallon of gas for 12 months, while backfilling funding for transportation projects using the state's multibillion-dollar General Fund surplus. Previous proposals were criticized for allowing oil companies to pocket the tax savings without guaranteeing lower gas prices for consumers. With the Senate Pro Tem and Assembly Speaker not yet moving towards any gas specific relief, it is not clear whether the Problem Solvers have a pathway to execute their vision. And while the big concepts are not yet decided upon, neither are the details. Selecting a state agency to oversee the program is the latest point of contention, a decision that could determine how quickly people receive rebates.

The Governor has warned against a legislative plan to leave the process to the state Franchise Tax Board, the agency that distributed state-issued pandemic relief checks. Instead, he has proposed hiring a third-party vendor to work with the California Department of Motor Vehicles in providing debit card payments to car owners, though lawmakers say they have little confidence in that approach and that refunds should not be given strictly to drivers. The lack of agreement between

the administration and the Legislature created one near certainty. Unfortunately, the scheduled 3-cent per gallon gas tax increase for July 3, which the Governor's plan would have suspended, now looks as though it is a certainty to happen. The Legislature needed to act by May 1 to suspend that cost-of-living increase. *Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com*

Small Ag Business Drought Relief: Taking a look at the other economic relief proposals currently being considered during budget negotiations, the California Small Agricultural Business Drought Relief Grant Program includes \$75 million one-time General Fund to provide direct assistance to eligible agriculture-related businesses that have been affected by severe drought conditions. Grant awards range from \$30,000 to \$50,000, depending on annual gross revenue decline, and will be prioritized first to businesses located in regions hardest hit by drought impacts.

Of the total program funds, 25 percent will be allocated to small farms and socially disadvantaged farmers, including 5 percent of total program funds for technical assistance for these groups. The grant program would be administered by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) within GO-Biz, in consultation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. *Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com*

Broadband Middle-Mile Initiative: The May Revision proposes \$600 million one-time General Fund in 2023-24 and \$500 million one-time General Fund in 2024-25 to the California Department of Technology to support the completion of the Broadband Middle-Mile Initiative. The 2021 Budget Act provided \$3.25 billion to CDT for the purpose of building an open-access middle-mile broadband network. Revised estimates produced by CDT indicate a need for this additional funding to complete the Broadband Middle-Mile Initiative due to increased costs of labor and supplies. *Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com*

Cannabis Tax Reform: The May Revision proposes statutory changes to reform cannabis taxes. These changes include:

- Setting the cultivation tax rate at zero beginning July 1, 2022.
- Shifting the point of collection and remittance for excise tax from distribution to retail on January 1, 2023
- Increasing the excise tax to 19 percent, beginning on January 1, 2024, but allows the Department of Tax and Fee Administration, in consultation with the Department of Finance, to reduce the excise tax depending on the revenues received in the Cannabis Tax Fund and General Fund availability.
- Setting aside \$150 million one-time General Fund, available until 2025-26, to backfill Allocation 3 funding, and setting Allocation 3 funding for youth education/intervention/treatment, environmental restoration, and state and local law enforcement programs at a baseline of \$670 million annually for three years.
- Enforcement policies to increase tax compliance and collection, as well as labor standards. Not unlike the situation with the gas tax, cannabis tax reform is not yet agreed upon between the Administration and Legislative leaders, as a handful of Assembly and Senate bills were

passed out of Appropriations committees this week that take different strategies than Newsom's. *Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com*

APPROPRIATIONS

The Senate and Assembly Appropriations Committees met this week to discuss the final set of bills moving through the Legislature and determine whether they will remain moving to the Floor or be held for the remainder of the session. Both committees heard collectively hundreds of bills holding roughly 220. Below is a high-level summary of bills monitored closely by Farm Bureau staff and their disposition. Those held in committee are no longer eligible to be heard this year. Those passed will move on the Floor of their originating house and those passed on B roll call mean Republican members of the committee did not vote for the measure.

Held Appropriations Committee: Assembly

[AB 1620](#) (Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, D-Winters), a bill which would have established a Broomrape Control Program at the Department of Food and Agriculture was held in committee. This bill would have established a process by which processing tomato growers and handlers from around the state could choose to assemble, assess themselves and conduct research on, survey and treat the causes of Broomrape. The tenants of this bill may continue to be a discussion in the state's budget negotiations through trailer bills. *Staff: Taylor Roschen; troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 1773](#) (Jim Patterson, D-Fresno) failed passage in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This Farm Bureau supported bill would have appropriated \$40 million for subvention funding for counties with lands enrolled in the Williamson Act. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2078](#) (Heath Flora, R-Ripon) would have taken a comprehensive approach to address California's chronic water shortage by expanding the Department of Water Resources Atmospheric Rivers research, mitigation, and climate forecasting program (AR Program), and advance the department's atmospheric river forecast capabilities. Farm Bureau was in support. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[AB 2153](#) (Joaquin Arambula, D-Fresno) was also held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This bill would have expanded the existing fruit and vegetable EBT pilot program, which would have allowed low-income consumers to get extra funds to buy California grown commodities at farmers' markets, now at retail locations. While the bill has failed for this year, Dr. Arambula has included this item as a \$300 million budget request. Farm Bureau is supportive of both the bill and budget request. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2182](#) (Wicks) was held on the suspense file. AB 2182 would have imposed new requirements on employers to not discriminate against, and offer accommodation to, employees with vaguely-defined “family responsibilities.” Farm Bureau opposed as such ambiguities inevitably lead to some employees abusing the program and employers who incur the litigation expense. *Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com*

[AB 2183](#) (Stone), agricultural employee card check legislation, was sent from the suspense file to the Assembly floor. AB 2183 is a re-tread of AB 616 (also by Stone) vetoed by Governor Newsom in September 2021. As in the past, proponents characterized the bill as a reform allowing mail-in balloting in Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) elections despite the bill’s plain language permitting union agents to distribute, supervise the completion of, gather and return to the ALRB “ballots” envisioned by the bill. Farm Bureau opposes. *Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com*

[AB 2188](#) (Quirk) was sent from the suspense file to the Assembly floor. AB 2188 will ban the use of blood, skin, or urine testing for cannabis metabolites for any employment-related screening to detect cannabis use, permitting the use only of saliva tests or performance to determine actual intoxication. A broad coalition of employers has expressed concern that AB 2188 unduly restricts employers’ ability to deter on-the-job intoxication. Farm Bureau opposes. *Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com*

[AB 2213](#) (Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, D-Winters), a Farm Bureau supported bill, was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This bill would have required the Department of Food and Agriculture to provide funding for research into the amount of smoke compounds in wine grapes and wine, identify ways to mitigate for and prevent future damage. The tenants of this bill may also be discussed during budget negotiations. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2243](#) (Garcia) was sent from the suspense file to the Assembly floor with amendments to the scope of the revisions to the scope of the Heat Illness and Wildfire Smoke standards the bill directs Cal/OSHA and the Standards Board to undertake. Prior to the most recent amendments, AB 2243 would have directed Cal/OSHA to propose to the Standards Board amendments to the Heat Illness Prevention Standard to implement a set super-high heat requirements when the temperature exceeds 105 degrees F, including hourly breaks and distribution of written heat illness prevention plans to employees, amend the Wildfire Smoke Standard to require use of N95 respirators when the AQI for PM 2.5 exceeds 200 and various other changes to both standards vaguely defined to protect piece-rate employees. Farm Bureau opposes pending review of the latest amendments because such changes to regulations should be subject to the stakeholder process set forth by law where those seeking changes can petition the Standards Board. *Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com*

[AB 2252](#) by Aguiar Curry: The author intended the bill to ensure the state has the information it needs to assess whether efforts to rebuild following a disaster leave residents with reliable telecommunications services by having broadband providers report certain information. The bill was supported by the Farm Bureau, California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC), as well as the Utility Reform Network (TURN), who argued, among other things, the CPUC does not make clear the CPUC’s telecommunications

reporting rules apply to broadband service providers and that this bill would make this application clear. *Staff: Taylor Roschen; troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2387](#) (Eduardo Garcia, D-Coachella) would have created the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2022. Had the measure moved forward and been signed by the Governor, and approved by the voters, would have authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$7,430,000,000. Farm Bureau had not positioned on the measure. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[AB 2412](#) (Carlos Villapudua, D-Stanislaus) was also held in the Appropriations Committee. This bill would have codified the existing State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) in state law and allow growers who can't demonstrate energy efficiencies but can prove water efficiencies to access funds. Farm Bureau was a co-sponsor of this measure. While the measure failed passage, the Governor's budget still proposes roughly \$110 million this year for SWEEP. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2500](#) (Joaquin Arambula, D-Fresno) a bill which would establish a farm to hospital program was held in the Assembly Appropriations committee. This program would have incentivized state hospitals to buy California grown fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry and dairy products. Farm Bureau was in support. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2613](#), introduced by Assemblymember Robert Rivas (D – Salinas), was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on the suspense file. This Farm Bureau sponsored measure would create a pilot program which would have prioritized grants for farmers and ranchers to help clean up illegally dumped waste on their property. The pilot program would have been funded up to \$1 million, in addition to the current CalRecycle program's \$1 million allocation. The current [Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Grant Program](#) funds many cleanup projects on publicly owned land, or land that is merely zoned for agriculture and not in active use. As the program has recently become oversubscribed, these kinds of projects could be taking away opportunities from farmers and ranchers which are confronted with this problem on a regular basis. This bill would have made pilot program funds exclusively available for private and active agricultural lands, in hopes that it will help members with this growing problem. *Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com*

[AB 2889](#) (Buffy Wicks, D - Oakland) would have required each electrical corporation to prepare and submit a multiyear wildfire mitigation plan, covering at least 7 years and not more than 10 years, that includes, among other things, a methodology for identifying and prioritizing circuits for mitigation based on wildfire risk reduction, public safety, and reliability benefits, and a comparison of undergrounding versus aboveground hardening of electrical equipment. Farm Bureau had an opposed unless amended position on the bill and had been working with the sponsor to refine the language. *Staff: Karen Mills; kmills@cfbf.com or Kevin Johnston; kjohnston@cfbf.com*

Held Appropriations Committee: Senate

[**SB 832**](#) (Bill Dodd, D-Napa) would have established a pilot program to allow water diversion and use volume estimates through evapotranspiration (ET) methodologies. Farm Bureau was in support. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[**SB 1404**](#) (Henry Stern, D-Calabasas) would have required a lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act to assess whether a project would result in the conversion of oak woodlands. In the instance it resulted in the removal of 3 or more oak trees, the project would have a “significant effect on the environment” and trigger a full CEQA analysis and mitigation measures. The bill was held in Committee. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[**SB 1458**](#) (Limon) was held on the Senate Appropriations suspense file. AB 1458 would have increased workers’ compensation disability payments for women based on gender pay disparities determined either by data provided by the California Fair Employment and Housing Department or by the U.S. Department of Labor. Farm Bureau opposed due to the cost increases it would have caused for workers’ compensation in California’s already-expensive workers’ comp system and serious implementation challenges described on the Senate Labor Committee’s staff analysis and raised by several members of that committee when that committee considered SB 1458 on April 27. *Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com*

Do Pass Assembly Suspense

[**AB 1870**](#) (Mark Stone, D-Santa Cruz), a Farm Bureau supported bill, passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This bill proposes to create a streamlined application process for licensing and registration of organic food processors and handler by January 1, 2024. The bill will next be heard on the Assembly Floor for third reading before being referred to the Senate. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[**AB 1879**](#) (Devon Mathis, R-Porterville) would authorize a regional water quality control board to develop a plan or policy to address unfounded, or frivolous complaints. Farm Bureau has not positioned on the measure. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

Do Pass Senate Suspense

[**SB 880**](#) (John Laird, D-Santa Cruz) would extend indefinitely the January 1, 2023 sunset in existing law authorizing those who divert 100 acre feet of water or more per year to be considered qualified to install and maintain their water diversion measurement devices if they take a course taught by the University of California Cooperative Extension, and pass a proficiency test. Farm Bureau supports. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[SB 1308](#) (Anna Caballero, D-Salinas) passed the Senate Appropriations Committee. This bill would expand the Buy American Provision to prohibit public colleges and schools from purchasing agricultural products grown, packed, or processed non-domestically. These institutions would only be exempt from these requirements if the non-domestic bids were 25% lower than the domestic bid. The bill will next be heard on the Senate Floor in the coming weeks. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[SB 1219](#) (Melissa Hurtado, D-Sanger) would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency and the Secretary of Cal/EPA to convene a committee to develop and submit recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature for modernizing California water laws and regulations, and state and local water agencies. Farm Bureau has not positioned on the measure. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[SB 926](#) by Dodd: The bill would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, on or before January 1, 2023, to establish, consistent with the Budget Act of 2021, the Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program to support coverage for losses from permitted prescribed fires by individuals and nonpublic entities, such as Native American tribes, including cultural fire practitioners, as defined, private landowners, and other nongovernmental entities through the Prescribed Fire Claims Fund, which the bill would establish. Farm Bureau Supports. *Staff: Taylor Roschen; troschen@cfbf.com*

[SB 1109](#) by Caballero: The bill would revise the financial commitments by which electrical corporations collectively procure their proportionate share of the cumulative rated generating capacity to 5 to 15 years, inclusive. The bill would require any incremental procurement of electricity products from bioenergy resources by a new contract or contract extension of 10 years or longer in duration to be from a resource that meets emission limits equivalent to, or more stringent than, the best available retrofit control technology determined at the time of procurement. Farm Bureau Supports. *Staff: Taylor Roschen; troschen@cfbf.com*

[SB 856](#) (Dodd – Napa) passed out of the Senate Appropriators Committee. This bill would affect regulations regarding hunting of feral pigs. Farm Bureau has concerns with portions of the bill, as introduced, and has been in communication with the author's office and fellow stakeholders to develop alternatives to address these concerns. CAFB currently holds the position of "Oppose Unless Amended," and will continue to engage as this bill moves into the second house. *Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com*

Do Pass, B Role Call

[AB 2108](#) (Rob Rivas, D-Salinas) would require that one of the persons appointed by the Governor to the State Water Resources Control Board be qualified in the field of water supply and water quality relating to disadvantaged or tribal communities and not be the same member as the member appointed who is qualified in the field of water supply and water quality relating to irrigated agriculture. The bill would also require that at least one person appointed to each regional board have specialized experience to represent disadvantaged or tribal communities. Farm Bureau has not positioned on the measure. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

Friday Review readers may remember [AB 2146](#) (Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, D-San Ramon). This bill would prohibit the use of neonicotinoids in California with a narrow agricultural exemption. The bill would only authorize use during an “environmental emergency,” which declared by the Department of Pesticide Regulation, would threaten human/environmental health and cause significant loss to crops with no alternative product for use available. The bill passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee and will next be heard on the Assembly Floor. Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations have remained opposed. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2649](#) (Cristina Garcia, D-Bell Gardens), which also passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee, would require the state to remove 60 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually by 2030 and 75 million metric tons by 2035 through carbon sequestration efforts on natural and working lands. Based on Farm Bureau’s assessment, this is not a realistic or possible endeavor. The bill passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee and will next be heard on the Floor. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2793](#) (Al Muratsuchi, D-Torrance) also passed out of the Appropriations Committee with republicans voting no. This bill would require the Air Resources Board to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cap-and-Trade system every three years. It also allows, after presenting to a Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change, the Air Resources Board to change the Cap-and-Trade system regulations to guide the next Scoping Plan Update. The bill will next be heard on the Assembly Floor. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2499](#) (Brian Maienschein, D-Poway) has passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee with proposed amendments. The bill would establish a program at the Department of Food and Agriculture to facilitate transition to organic for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Currently, the bill places the program with the Equity Officer rather than in the State Organic Program or the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation, which is Farm Bureau’s suggestion. Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry, the author of the Farmer Equity Act, echoed this concern and we anticipate amendments as the bill reaches the Appropriations Committee. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

[AB 2201](#) (Steve Bennett, D-Ventura) would codify the Governor’s Drought Executive Order regarding groundwater well permitting agencies and Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). a) Local well permitting agencies must receive written verification from the GSA that the proposed well (in high and medium priority basins) is consistent with the adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and will not decrease the likelihood of achieving the sustainability goals that the GSAs have developed, and b) Regardless of basin priority, local well permitting agency must determine before issuing a well permit that the proposed well is not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells and is not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure. Farm Bureau remains opposed. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[AB 2451](#) (Jim Wood, D-Santa Rosa) would require the State Water Resources Control Board to establish a Drought Section within the Division of Water Rights. The bill would also require the board, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to adopt principles and guidelines for diversion and use of water in coastal watersheds during drought and for the development of contingency plans to support public trust uses, public health and safety, and the human right to water in times of water shortage. Farm Bureau has not positioned on the measure. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

[AB 2639](#) (Bill Quirk, D-Hayward) is one of several bills introduced to implement the Planning and Conservation League's recommendations contained in a recent report entitled, "*Updating California Water Laws to Address Drought and Climate Change.*" Farm Bureau opposes the measure unless amended to soften the date and remove the water rights moratorium language. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

Rep No Vote

[AB 2836](#) by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia (D – Coachella) was passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This bill would extend the current authorization for the Carl Moyer Program to fund a broader range of projects that reduce emissions from covered sources until January 1, 2033. The Carl Moyer Program provides incentives to private businesses and public agencies to voluntarily clean up older, dirtier vehicles and mobile off-road engines through retrofit or replacement. It provides funding to reduce particulate pollution and NOx, which contributes to smog formation and cleans up on-road, off-road, marine, locomotive, stationary agricultural pumps and farm equipment engines. Farm Bureau has joined a large coalition of agricultural stakeholders to support this measure. *Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com*

OTHER ITEMS

Commodities

The Department of Food and Agriculture has announced they will be expanding the quarantine boundary for Huanglongbing (HLB), a deadly citrus disease, in Los Angeles County to include the South Gate Area. The map of the quarantine boundary can be seen [here](#). *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

Land Use

[AB 2840](#) (Eloise Reyes Gomez, D-Los Angeles) will likely be heard next week on the Assembly Floor. This bill would prohibit the expansion of any warehouse facility 100,000 square feet or greater that is adjacent to a home, school, hospital day care center, etc. unless that project included 1,000-foot setbacks. Farm Bureau joins business organizations and organized labor in opposition to the bill. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

Pesticides

The Pesticide Registration and Evaluation Committee released their findings this week following a hearing on findings of imidacloprid in groundwater between 2003 and 2021 in wells in Fresno, Santa Barbara and Tulare counties. Imidacloprid is a widely used insecticide to treat for a variety of pests on agricultural commodities. The results of the Committee hearings, which heard testimony from the Department, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and the registrant, was to reject a claim that the presence had an polluting impact on drinking water that would have otherwise supported future regulatory action. The Committee's [recommendations](#) demonstrate concern about the sampling protocols the Department used to substantiate the hearing, namely a single spike found on a well that served a vacant house. The Committee did encourage the Department and staff to continue to monitor groundwater wells in vulnerable areas, such as Tulare and Fresno counties. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cfbf.com*

Pollinators

The California Pollinator Coalition held their quarterly meeting on Tuesday this week. The group discussed many topics including the new CDFA Pollinator Program which aims to promote pollinator friendly programs through grants. As previously noted in *Farm Bureau at Work*, CAFB has concerns with the proposed program and submitted comments reflecting those concerns. The Pollinator Partnership also presented at the meeting asking for farmer and rancher participation in a [survey](#) regarding on-farm practices. The [survey](#) hopes to gather information on California grower's preferences for conservation programs, and ultimately improve programs offered by USDA. You are encouraged to participate in this survey whether or not you have already participated in a USDA conservation program. Your responses will not identify you individually; results will be aggregated and anonymized when presented. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to CAFB staff, or Pollinator Partnership Staff listed on the link provided. Farm Bureau remains engaged on pollinator efforts throughout the state and appreciates your feedback on local efforts. *Staff: Katie Little at klittle@cfbf.com*

Transportation

This week, [AB 2415](#) by Assemblymember Lackey (R – Palmdale) passed out of the Assembly and onto the Senate. This bill would extend the exemption for agricultural vehicles from the BIT program until January 1, 2026. The original legislation, introduced in 2016, excluded an agricultural vehicle from being subject to the BIT program, and defined agricultural vehicle to mean a vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating or a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, including that the vehicle is operated by certain individuals and is used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations when operating in commerce. The bill also required the Department of the California Highway Patrol, in consultation with the Department of Motor Vehicles, to report to the governor and the Legislature about the impact of excluding agricultural vehicles from the BIT program before January 1, 2022. Due to delays, this report has not been filed by CHP. This Cattlemen's sponsored bill would extend the agricultural exemption from BIT by three years – until January 1, 2026. This will provide the Legislature and stakeholders the opportunity to address any concerns CHP may identify regarding the exemption; if no significant concerns exist, this extended

sunset provides time for later legislation to make the agricultural vehicle exemption permanent. Farm Bureau supports this bill as it moves to the second house. *Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com*

Water

Governor Gavin Newsom appears to be putting pressure on the 9-member California Water Commission, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, for the Sites Reservoir Project. During a Senate budget subcommittee hearing this week, Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot said the governor directed him to ensure that the commission “isn’t slowing down the progress of getting Proposition 1 projects online.” Newsom also charged Crowfoot with finding ways to remove regulatory barriers and accelerate the approval process for those projects. *Staff: Danny Merkley, dmerkley@cfbf.com*

Wildlife

This week, the Department of Fish and Wildlife released the second component of reimbursement for the Wolf Compensation Program. [A new form](#) has been added to the Department’s website for reimbursement of deterrence measures used to protect livestock from wolves. The website states, *“Livestock producers who use non-lethal deterrent methods to deter wolf presence near livestock in areas of [known wolf activity](#) can apply for compensation of associated costs. The CDFW supports the use of various non-lethal techniques to deter wolf presence near livestock. Producers, landowners, their employees and agent(s) are encouraged to contact their County Agricultural Commissioner, the CDFW, and agency partners for technical assistance and to explore options.”* Farm Bureau members may be aware that CAFB has been working for several months with the Department and fellow stakeholders on last year’s budget allocation for the [Wolf Livestock Loss Compensation Grant Program](#). The \$3 million allocation aimed to compensate ranchers for wolf related losses. The pilot would provide funds and reimbursement for 1) direct loss due to wolf depredation, 2) pay for wolf presence (negative impacts on cattle due to stress), and 3) reimbursement for efforts to deter wolf/livestock interaction (i.e. fencing). CAFB led the small subgroup in hopes of drafting a program that would benefit our members, and compensate them accordingly. In March, the Department stopped all progress on these efforts, deciding to restructure the workgroup at an undetermined date. In the interim, the Department has released this temporary program in order to meet their fiscal responsibilities laid out in last year’s budget. Farm Bureau remains an active participant, and continues to advocate for farmers to be reimbursed for all impacts that the increasing number of predators in the state have on their livestock. If you need any help with the form, or have any questions about the program, please reach out to Farm Bureau staff. *Staff: Katie Little at klittle@cfbf.com*

Cannabis

The Department of Cannabis Control has issued a Notice of Emergency Regulatory Action regarding proposed rulemaking to readopt emergency regulations for cannabis license fee waivers. The Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) is providing notice to the public of its intent to readopt its emergency regulations implementing [SB 166](#) which requires DCC to develop and implement a program to provide waivers for cannabis licensing fees, with at least 60 percent of the total amount of fee waivers allocated to fee waivers for local equity applicants and licenses. The cannabis equity

fee waiver program is designed to assist commercial cannabis license applicants and licensees who have been harmed by the War on Drugs. DCC proposes this readoption action to allow emergency regulations, with amendments, to remain in place while DCC continues working to begin the process of permanently adopting the regulations through the regular rulemaking action. View the proposed finding of emergency and notice of proposed readoption and the proposed text of emergency regulations here: [Finding of Emergency and Notice of Proposed Readoption Emergency Regulation text](#). DCC will file the emergency readopt package with the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) after the required five-working day notice to the public. The public comment period, which lasts five-calendar days, will begin when OAL publishes the proposed regulations as being “under review” on its website: <https://oal.ca.gov/>. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com