

# FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL UPDATE

September 3, 2021

## Agricultural Employment

On September 1, the Assembly concurred in Senate amendments to AB 616 (Mark Stone, D-Monterey Bay); AB 616 proceeds now to the Governor's desk for final action. Farm Bureau will ask the Governor to veto. AB 616 creates a new "ballot card" election option for labor unions seeking to unionize employees under the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA). The "ballot card" procedure amounts to "card check," allowing union organizers to coerce, intimidate, or otherwise induce agricultural employees to sign "ballot cards." AB 616 denies agricultural employees the right to an Agricultural Labor Relations Board-supervised secret ballot election that protects employees from intimidation from any party with an interest in the outcome (the reason secret ballot elections were strongly advocated by civil rights icon Cesar Chavez). Farm Bureau is planning a rally at the State Capitol on September 9, demanding the state provide water, construct agriculture-critical infrastructure and veto AB 616. *Staff: Bryan Little; 916-561-5622 or [blittle@cfbf.com](mailto:blittle@cfbf.com).*

## Commodities

CDFA's Pest Exclusion Branch is announcing five midterm vacancies on the Industrial Hemp Advisory Board (IHAB). The Board is composed of thirteen members and the term of office for board members is three years. The Board advises CDFA and makes recommendations on matters including, but not limited to, industrial hemp law and regulations, enforcement, annual budgets, and the setting of an assessment rate. Individuals interested in being considered for this Board appointment should send a letter of interest and a brief resumé to Juan Koponen by September 30, 2021, or by e-mail to [industrialhemp@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:industrialhemp@cdfa.ca.gov). For additional information, visit the Industrial Hemp Program webpage at: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/industrialhemp/>, contact the Nursery, Seed, and Cotton Program at (916) 654-0435, or send an email to [industrialhemp@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:industrialhemp@cdfa.ca.gov). *Staff: Katie Little, [klittle@cfbf.com](mailto:klittle@cfbf.com) or (916) 446-4647.*

## Education

CDFA is accepting proposals for the 2021 California Agriculture Special Interest License Plate (CalAgPlate) grant program. This program projects an estimated \$225,000 in grant funding available to promote agricultural education and leadership activities for students at the K-12, post-secondary, and adult education levels. Funding is available on a competitive basis for state-adopted Agricultural Education Programs, government agencies, and non-profit organizations that administer agricultural education programs. The application deadline is Thursday, September 30, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. PT. Prospective applicants are encouraged to visit the programs website [www.cdfa.ca.gov/calagplate](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/calagplate) for detailed application instructions.

## Food Safety

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch (MPES) announces two vacancies on the Rendering Industry Advisory Board (RIAB). RIAB makes recommendations to CDFA's Secretary on all matters pertaining to the MPES Rendering Program. Both vacancies are for an industry member and the term is 36 months. Applicants for the industry member must be affiliated with a licensed renderer, collection center, dead animal haulers, or registered transporter of inedible kitchen grease. Applicants interested in being considered for RIAB appointment should send a resume by September 17, 2021 to: Laura Barlow, Program Manager Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch [Laura.Barlow@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:Laura.Barlow@cdfa.ca.gov). Additional

information is available on the MPES web page at: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/index.html>. You may also contact Paula Batarseh, Branch Chief, Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety at (916) 900-5004. *Staff: Katie Little, [klittle@cfbf.com](mailto:klittle@cfbf.com) or (916) 446-4647.*

## Transportation

For the past few months, a coalition led by the California Farm Bureau and California League of Food Producers has attempted to provide greater flexibility for agricultural haulers. Given the scarcity of licensed commercial drivers in California, specifically in agricultural hauling, the coalition was successful in providing a temporary, ten-percent increase in hauling weights. This temporary exclusion was set to expire on August 31, 2021 but has since been extended until December 31, 2021 for ANY perishable agricultural commodity. For those of you familiar with this issue, the original exclusion was only authorized for the transportation of a few commodities (tomatoes, peaches, pears, grapes, onions, carrots, citrus, almonds, pistachios, walnuts, olives, pomegranates, rice, wheat, corn, safflower, and potatoes) but has since been expanded by this recent extension.

We do appreciate the commitment and concerns expressed by our colleagues at the California State Board of Food and Agriculture, and Secretary Karen Ross, and for continuing the conversation and dialogue with the appropriate transportation officials. This temporary authorization will allow California agricultural haulers to haul up to 88,000lbs on state routes, only. Agricultural haulers, or carriers, would have to also apply for a special weight permit for the overweight loads and can be accessed here:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits/perishable-agricultural-products>

The authorization is temporary and will expire on December 31, 2021. The permits are valid for up to 60-days and should provide additional transportation flexibility for California's farmers and our associated hauling partners. *Staff: Robert Spiegel at [rspiegel@cfbf.com](mailto:rspiegel@cfbf.com) or (916) 446-4647.*

## Waste

As Friday review readers may recall, Farm Bureau has supported AB 332 (Assembly Environmental Safety), a bill which would re-authorize the alternative management standards of treated wood waste that have been in place in regulation since July 2008. This bill was passed onto the governor's desk and was signed into law on Tuesday, August 31. *Staff: Katie Little at [klittle@cfbf.com](mailto:klittle@cfbf.com) Taylor Roschen, [troschen@cfbf.com](mailto:troschen@cfbf.com) or 916-446-4647.*

Please be advised that the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has added a new item to the Treated Wood Waste Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) webpage. The new FAQ is titled **“What is the process for extending a TWW variance.”** Scroll down the page to find the added FAQ, which is the second from the bottom. <https://dtsc.ca.gov/treated-wood-waste-tww-frequently-asked-questions/>. If you have any questions about the TWW variance process, please refer to the information DTSC's website such as the TWW fact sheet and FAQs or send an email to [TWW help@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:TWW_help@dtsc.ca.gov). *Staff: Katie Little, [klittle@cfbf.com](mailto:klittle@cfbf.com) or (916) 446-4647.*

## Water

A measure that would provide funding for technical assistance to farmers in critically over drafted groundwater basins was placed on the inactive file this week, meaning it is now a two-year bill. **AB 350** (Carlos Villapudua, D-Stockton) would have established a program at the Department of Food and Agriculture to provide funding for technical assistance providers to help farmers in critically over drafted groundwater basins in the San Joaquin Valley to plan and implement water use efficiencies. Farm Bureau had been working with the author on amendments to address concerns. *Staff: Danny Merkley, [dmerkley@cfbf.com](mailto:dmerkley@cfbf.com) or (916) 446-4647*