



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.

July 08, 2022

Climate Change

[AB 710](#) (Eduardo Garcia, D-Coachella) failed to pass the Assembly Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee before the legislative deadline last week. The bill would have prohibited a retailer or distributor to offer an agricultural product for sale in the state unless the product was produced in accordance with the State's environmental, health and labor laws. Growers, including California producers, would have been required to provide self-attestation forms, signed under penalty of perjury to distributors which could have been audited at any time by the Department of Food and Agriculture. The bill is no longer active. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cbbf.com*

[SB 1308](#) (Anna Caballero-D, Salinas) would have required California schools to solicit bids from California producers before accepting an out of state bid for agricultural products to be used in school meals. The bill would have also required schools to choose the California bid if it were no more than 25% higher than the out of state bid. This bid preference would also be in place for Community Colleges, the University of California, and the California State University system. This bill would have effectively enforced the federal Buy America Provision. The bill failed to pass the Assembly Education Committee before the legislative deadline and is no longer active in this year's legislative session. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cbbf.com*

Food Safety

After over a year of deliberation and discussion, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the Monterey County Farm Bureau have released a report titled, "California Agricultural Neighbors: Neighbor-to-neighbor best practices to help enhance localized food safety efforts." These organizations led various stakeholders collaboratively, since January 2021, to discuss opportunities in Salinas Valley to enhance food safety techniques of ag operations adjacent to one another. The full report can be read [here](#). Farm Bureau thanks Monterey County Farm Bureau Executive Director, Norm Groot, for his hard work on this important report. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cbbf.com*

Organic

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has awarded \$1.85 million to the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) to increase technical assistance for California's organic farmers. Roughly half of this funding is provided by the State Organic Program and the remainder is from the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation. The UCANR project will include peer-reviewed research, statewide transition assistance, and reports of organic acreage, practices and economic analyses of organic markets. The State Budget, signed last week, also includes \$5 million for CDFA to aid growers transitioning to organic production. *Staff: Taylor Roschen, troschen@cbbf.com*

Insurance

On Wednesday, July 13, the California Farm Bureau will provide testimony to a California Department of Insurance (CDI) Investigative Hearing regarding the FAIR Plan. CDI is holding the investigative hearing to gather information regarding the operations, policies and procedures of the California FAIR Plan Association (FAIR Plan) to inform actions needed for it to evolve to meet the changing needs of California consumers.

As the “insurer of last resort” established in 1968 by the Governor and Legislature to serve all Californians, the FAIR Plan’s fundamental mission since its founding is to meet the needs of California homeowners and businesses unable to find insurance in the traditional marketplace. The FAIR Plan is a joint reinsurance association formed by all insurers licensed to write property insurance in California.

CDI states that the impetus for the investigative hearing stems from persistent concerns raised by consumers, businesses, and others about the FAIR Plan’s internal operations and external factors including but not limited to the need for greater liability coverage for homes and businesses, the need for increased personnel and resources, the handling of smoke claims, higher commercial coverage limits, and interpretation of underwriting guidelines, among other factors.

The investigatory hearing will explore (1) the concerns and needs of California consumers, organizations, businesses, and brokers that conduct business with the FAIR Plan and (2) what additional changes are needed to the FAIR Plan’s operations, governance, business practices, and coverage offerings to enable it to continue to meet those needs far into the future.

You may remember that last year the California Farm Bureau sponsored [SB 11](#), so that farms could access the FAIR Plan, and worked with CDI to increase FAIR Plan commercial policy limits. While SB 11 has proved vital to provide a backstop to the all too frequent reality of insurance policy non-renewals occurring across farming and rural communities, the implementation of it and [AB 3012](#) (2019), which requires the FAIR Plan to institute a homeowner policy clearinghouse in order to move policies back to the admitted marketplace, needs to be examined. *Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com*