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.

February 2, 2024

Land Use

SB 973 authored by Senator Shannon Grove (R Bakersfield) has been introduced. Under a current law called the Williamson Act, a city or county may contract with a landowner to limit the use of agricultural land located in an agricultural preserve designated by the city or county to preserve the land, subject to conditions of the contract. Those contracts may include an agreement on a specified valuation of the land for purposes of property taxation. The act authorizes a landowner to petition the city council or board of supervisors for cancellation of the contract under specified circumstances and imposes a cancellation fee equal to 12.5% of the fair market value of the land without the restriction of the contract. SB 973 would authorize a board or council to grant a petition for cancellation where the land subject to the contract is located in a basin under the jurisdiction of an adjudicated watermaster or the groundwater sustainability agency, changing the manner in which Williamson Act contract cancellations would occur. SB 973 adds a unique requirement in an effort to make it easier to cancel Williamson Act contracts, by focusing on lands that may be pressured to fallow due to lack of available groundwater.

The bill would require the landowner to commit to limiting the amount of water rights to a specific solar energy project that uses less water than previous agricultural use, and t to that extent, require the board or council to find that the solar energy project will use less water than the agricultural use. The bill would prohibit the imposition of the currently mandated cancellation fee when a contract is canceled pursuant to the bill's provisions. Also, the bill would require the landowner to execute and record a deed restriction that includes a prohibition on the landowner from entering into a contract pursuant to the act with respect to the land if the landowner is issued a certificate of cancellation pursuant to the bill's provisions, meaning the new permitted use would move with the land through that deed restriction. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

Pesticides

Invasive Fruit Fly Quarantines in California

California is experiencing an unusually high number of invasive fruit fly detections this season. Counties currently impacted by Invasive Fruit Fly Quarantines are:

1. Oriental fruit fly: Contra Costa, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino and Santa Clara Counties
2. Mediterranean fruit fly: Los Angeles County
3. Tau fruit fly: Los Angeles County
4. Queensland fruit fly: Los Angeles and Ventura Counties

We Need Your Help!

1. Now is a critical time for residents in fruit fly quarantine areas to protect their backyard fruits and vegetables from invasive fruit flies.
2. To prevent the spread of invasive fruit flies through homegrown fruits and vegetable, residents living in the invasive fruit fly quarantine areas are urged not to move any fruits and vegetables from their properties.

3. Fruits and vegetables may be consumed or processed (i.e. juiced, frozen, cooked, or ground in the garbage disposal) at the property where they were picked.
4. If they are not consumed or processed, please dispose of them by double-bagging in plastic bags and putting the bags in the garbage bin for collection, not green waste.
5. If you are in an established quarantine area:
1. Please do not compost fruit or vegetables. Double bag and dispose of them in the regular waste bin, not the green waste bins.
2. Don't let ripened homegrown produce fall to the ground. Remove mature produce that has fallen to the ground by double bagging and disposing in the regular waste bin, not the green waste bins.
6. Before entering the United States from another country, declare agricultural products — including fruits or vegetables — to U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Help us protect our agriculture, natural resources, and unique biodiversity from invasive fruit files – Please Don't Pack a Pest when traveling or mailing/receiving packages.
7. Buy fruit trees and vegetable plants from licensed California nurseries, as receiving agricultural goods from uncertified sources can spread invasive pests. Source your plants locally and responsibly. To search for a licensed nursery near you, visit CDFA's Directory of Licensed Nurseries.
8. Inspect your garden for signs of invasive fruit flies or maggots and report any findings to CDFA at 1-800-491-1899 or your local county agricultural commissioner's office.
9. Please cooperate with agriculture officials and allow them access to your garden to inspect plants.

Staff: Chris Reardon, creardon@cfbf.com

Taxation

AB 1973 authored by Assemblymember Lackey (R Palmdale) has been introduced. This bill would, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2020, and before January 1, 2029, provide an exclusion from gross income for any qualified taxpayer for amounts received in settlement for costs and losses associated with the 2020 Bobcat Fire in the County of Los Angeles. This bill continues on the legislature's practice of requiring tax exemption bills specific to wildfire each wildfire event. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

Technology

AB 1969 authored by Assemblymember Gregg Hart (D Santa Barbara) has been introduced. The bill is sponsored by the Farm Bureau. Last year, Farm Bureau sponsored AB 1016, which Governor Newsom signed into law. That law directs DPR to develop new regulations that should expand farmers' access to the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) for pesticide applications. AB 1969 builds on the success of AB 1016 and directs the California Air Resources Board to include UAS in the Clean Off-Road Replacement Equipment (CORE) program. CORE is a voucher incentive project to provide vouchers that offset the cost of zero-emission off-road equipment, including agricultural equipment. This bill would require the state board to include unmanned aerial systems, commonly known as drones, in the meaning of agricultural equipment for purposes of CORE, which the bill would define as the program established by the state board as part of the Air Quality Improvement Program. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

Water

Newsom's Salmon Strategy

The Newsom Administration released a document this week that describes actions the State of California and its partners (federal government, local agencies, tribes, others) intend to pursue in the next three years to support restoration or recovery of salmonid populations statewide. Titled "California Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future," the document contains 60 specific actions including ecosystem flow management, habitat restoration, temperature control, fish passage projects, hatchery expansion, and other things that fish could benefit from under future climate change. Many of the actions are projects that are already underway, including removal of the four Klamath dams, setting short-term instream

flows on the Scott and Shasta rivers, and developing a long-term plan to support salmon in those rivers, completing the Salmon Conservation and Rearing Facility below Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River, etc. The total price tag for this strategy is unclear. Some of the priority actions listed for each section of the strategy have funding committed already, while others make no mention of funding sources or needs. Given the $37 billion-plus budget deficit in 2024 alone, it seems unlikely that the state will be able to check off the list all of the actions during the three-year horizon the strategy contemplates. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cfbf.com

Online Platform Now Available for in-Delta Water Use Reporting
The Delta ACP (Delta Alternative Compliance Plan) website is now live for water reporting in the legal Delta. The State Water Board's Office of the Delta Watermaster is encouraging all water reporting in the legal Delta (for both statement and license reporting) to report on a singular filing platform at www.DeltaACP.com. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cfbf.com

Potential Adoption of Biological Goals for Lower San Joaquin River Tributaries
During its bimonthly meeting on February 6, the State Water Board will consider adoption of the "final initial" biological goals for the tributaries to the lower San Joaquin River to support the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update. The draft initial goals were presented and adopted by the board on September 6, 2023, and subsequently revised to produce this final version. These final initial biological goals are not regulatory in nature, but rather represent metrics or benchmarks to assess the health and viability of fall-run Chinook salmon populations. They do not require any specific regulatory action, such as an increase or decrease in unimpaired flows. The draft board agenda includes additional information about the goals, along with in-person and remote participation options. Staff: Alex Biering abiering@cfbf.com

Wildfire

AB 1951 authored by Assemblymember Vince Fong (R Bakersfield) has been introduced. The bill would exempt from CEQA a project for wildfire prevention within 50 feet of either side of a roadway. *Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VACANCIES

CDFA ANNOUNCES VACANCIES ON REGISTERED SERVICE AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CDFA is announcing two vacancies on the Registered Service Agency (RSA) Advisory Committee.
The committee advises the department in all matters concerning the registration of service agencies as authorized by the Business and Professions Code (BPC).

CDFA's RSA Program is responsible for registering businesses and their employees who, for hire or payment of any kind, repair commercial weighing and measuring devices in California. CDFA's Division of Measurement Standards and county weights and measures officials monitor the work of service agencies and service agents in accordance with applicable requirements adopted in the BPC and the California Code of Regulations.

The RSA Advisory Committee consists of seven members. Two (2) positions are currently vacant:

- One member representing an industry client/customer of a service agency
- One member representing the public

Applicants must demonstrate applied knowledge in the field of weights and measures and have either technical expertise with commercial weighing and/or measuring devices or general knowledge of government oversight

of the RSA industry. The term of office is three years. Members are asked to be available to participate in a minimum of four meetings per fiscal year. The committee may meet more frequently if needed. Committee members receive no compensation but are entitled to payment for necessary travel expenses in accordance with the rules of the Department of Personnel Administration.

Individuals interested in being considered for appointment must send a brief letter of interest and a completed Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire to dms@cdfa.ca.gov by February 29, 2024. For further information on the RSA Program, visit https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/dms/programs/rsa/rsa.html or call the Division of Measurement Standards at (916) 229-3000.

CDFA ANNOUNCES VACANCIES ON FEED INSPECTION ADVISORY BOARD

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announces three vacancies on the Feed Inspection Advisory Board (FIAB). This board makes regulatory and enforcement recommendations to CDFA to help ensure that commercial feed inspections contribute to a clean and wholesome supply of milk, meat and eggs.

The FIAB vacancies are for three commercial feed industry representatives. Board member applicants must hold a current California Commercial Feed License. The term of office for board members is up to three years. Board members do not receive compensation, but they are entitled to necessary travel expenses.

Individuals interested in a board appointment must submit a resume and a completed Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire (PMAQ). The PMAQ is available on the CDFA website at: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/pdfs/PMAQ_Feed_IAB.pdf. Both the resume and PMAQ are due by February 29, 2024.

Send resume and PMAQ via email to Brittnie.Williams@cdfa.ca.gov or by mail to:

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Feed, Fertilizer and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Service Branch
Attn: Brittnie Williams
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