



July 8, 2011

Governor Brown signed [AB 29X](#) (Bob Blumenfield, D-Van Nuys) that will impose a \$150 “fee” on every habitable structure in the State Responsibility Area to fund fire prevention activities. The governor said that due to population and development growth in "state responsibility areas," taxpayer-borne costs for fire protection have risen in recent decades. In his [signing message](#) the governor also said that lawmakers need to clean up the proposal in subsequent legislation, although he was not specific as to what changes are necessary. The Legislature is counting on the new fees to be backfill \$50 million that was cut from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protections budget.

In Farm Bureau’s veto request, we told the governor that the proposal was an ill-conceived administrative nightmare that would do little to prevent wildfires in the SRA. We also reminded him that there is no return to source guarantee for the “fees” that will supposedly specifically benefit owners of structures, so the fee is really a tax. In many instances it will be a tax on top of other real fire protection taxes paid at the local level. We would like to thank our Farm Team members who sent 363 email messages to the governor requesting a veto of AB 29X.

Another important bill for many rural landowners is still pending action on Governor Brown’s desk. [AB 1265](#) (Jim Nielsen, R-Gerber) is also on the governor’s desk. This bill would reenact an alternative funding mechanism for the Williamson Act by allowing counties to adopt 10 percent shorter contracts in order to help reduce their foregone property tax revenue. Farm Bureau and many of the nearly 150 agricultural, environmental, local government entities and organizations of the Save the Williamson Act Coalition have urged the governor to sign the bill into law. The governor has until 1:30 pm on July 18 to act on AB 1265, but there is an expectation that he will act on the bill prior to that.

The State Water Resources Control Board will hold a workshop July 20 to consider information regarding the current trends and condition of agricultural water use efficiency. This informal workshop will include presentations and panels of experts and practitioners to explore California agricultural water use efficiency, including practices, requirements, trends, and the challenges and opportunities for further efficiency.

The State Water Resources Control Board will hold a workshop July 21 to consider information regarding water diversion measurements. With few exceptions, those who divert water are required to file Statements of Water Diversion and Use identifying their monthly water diversions beginning in January 2012. The Board will also consider how to best implement requirements for statement holders, water right permittees and licensees to report their maximum rate of diversion achieved during each month. The informal workshop will include presentations on water diversion measurement, including practices, requirements, and trends. The workshop will also give an opportunity for participants and stakeholders to provide comments. The workshop agenda is available

at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/diversion_use/#workshop2011july

This week the Office of Administrative Law approved an emergency regulation for agricultural water measurement. The regulation was submitted by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) after review by the California Water Commission last month. The regulation provides a range of options that agricultural water suppliers may use to comply with farm gate water delivery measurement requirements. The emergency action will be in effect through January 4, 2012. DWR intends to immediately file for a permanent regulation through a regular rulemaking process. Farm Bureau has been actively engaged in the Agricultural Stakeholder Committee tasked with developing and amending these emergency regulations in accordance with SBx7 7 (Darrel Steinberg, D-Sacramento)

The Senate Appropriations Committee will hear a measure Monday, July 11th that would authorize a district attorney or a city attorney in a jurisdiction with a population that exceeds 750,000 to bring civil actions under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act. Currently the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act authorizes each California regional water quality control board to delegate certain powers to its executive officer. That authorization excludes the executive officer from a delegation of power to ask the Attorney General for judicial enforcement. [AB 246](#) (Bob Wieckowski, D-Fremont) would delete that exclusion, and instead authorize a district attorney or a city attorney to pursue judicial enforcement only after approval by the Attorney General. Farm Bureau opposes.

A measure that would require local agencies to identify groundwater recharge areas, provide protections for those areas and require the maps be provided to local planning agencies will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee August 15. [AB 359](#) (Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael) was amended to address Farm Bureau's concerns regarding property owner notification. Therefore, Farm Bureau removed its opposition.

A measure that would establish state policy that every human being has the right to clean, affordable, and accessible water for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes, that is also adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and family. Additionally, [AB 685](#) (Mike Eng, D-Monterey Park) would require all relevant state agencies, including the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the State Department of Public Health, to consider this state policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, and grant criteria. Farm Bureau opposes.

A measure that would provide a conditional water right registration process for small irrigation projects will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee August 15. [AB 964](#) (Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael) would provide a means by which growers could obtain authorization to develop small offstream storage projects (no more than 20 acre feet annually) that could be used for irrigation while protecting fisheries. More than one registration may be in effect at any time if there is not more than one diversion and storage facility per 50 acres and if the total water use on all acreage covered by the registration does not exceed 100 acre feet annually. The bill is sponsored by the Wine Institute. Farm Bureau supports.

[SB 900](#) (Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento) expands the pool of candidates eligible to serve on regional water quality control boards. This measure will allow a person to serve on a regional water quality control board even if they receive, or have received in the previous two years, a portion of their income from someone who is subject to waste discharge requirements governed in another regional board's jurisdiction. SB 900 is currently on the inactive file. Farm Bureau supports.

Currently, California-based businesses that are insured with State Fund must obtain a separate workers' compensation policy to cover employees who work out of state. [AB 228](#) (Filipe Fuentes, D-Los Angeles) will clarify the current insurance code by clearly stating that California-based employers may seek workers' comp coverage from State Fund for all of their employees whether they work in-state or out-of-state. In spite of opposition from the Association of California Insurance Companies AB 228 passed out of the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee with a 5-0 vote. The bill now goes to Senate Appropriations. Farm Bureau supports.

To date, the High Speed Rail (HSR) Authority has been unresponsive to the many issues expressed at the public hearings held in the Central Valley by the farmers and ranchers who will be impacted by the HSR. AB 292 (Cathleen Galgiani, D-Tracy) would require the High Speed Rail Authority to appoint a nine-person agricultural advisory committee from a list provided by the Secretary of Food and Agriculture to advise the Authority on the impacts that its policies, plans and procedures will have on agriculture. In addition the bill requires that the Authority consult with the advisory committee prior to adopting any policy that would impact agriculture. AB 292 passed out of the Senate Agriculture committee and will be heard next in Senate Appropriations. Farm Bureau supports.

AB 634 (Alyson Huber, D-El Dorado Hills) would legalize the use of carbon monoxide to control vertebrate pests, such as rodents. In the late 90's California passed a law prohibiting the use of carbon monoxide to kill any animal in response to concerns raised over its use to euthanize dogs and cats in animal shelters. There was no consideration of carbon monoxide as a safe, humane, and effective control method for pests, such as gophers and ground squirrels, when the original law was enacted. After agreeing to work with the Committee chair on amendments to ensure oversight is available for the use of carbon monoxide, the bill passed out of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee 7-0. Farm Bureau is the sponsor. Once amendments are worked out the bill will move to the Senate Floor.

AB 511 (Mariko Yamada, D-Davis) would require the marking of meteorological towers between 50 and 200 feet to ensure visibility for low flying aircraft. Improved visibility would protect the lives of pilots farmers hire to apply seed, fertilizer, and pest control products. Earlier this year, a pilot was killed when his plane hit one of these towers. After an extensive discussion of the bill at an earlier hearing the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee continued the discussion and was only willing to move the bill if the author agreed to limit its application to rural areas and areas with agricultural production. The author was hesitant to limit the bill, which ultimately failed 2-7. The bill was granted reconsideration and could be taken up again in January. Farm Bureau supports.

On July 1st the Board of Equalization notified all retailers selling tangible personal property in California that the statewide sales and use tax rate decreased from 8.25 percent to 7.25 percent. This reduction in the statewide rate also decreased the partial state tax exemption rate on farm equipment and machinery, diesel fuel used in farming activities or food processing, timber harvesting equipment and machinery, and racehorse breeding stock from 6.25 percent to 5.25 percent. This simultaneous action means that the amount of sales and use tax use on these exempt items will remain the same when they are purchased by a qualified farmer or rancher.

Locally impose sales and use taxes rates can vary as much as 2.5 percent depending on whether or not the voters have adopted any additional special district taxes. The exact amount of sale and use tax due when purchasing these farm inputs, timber harvesting equipment or breeding stock varies by jurisdiction. Attached is a list of the California Sales and Use Tax rates by county and city, effective July 1, 2011, that includes state, county, local, and district taxes. To determine the sales and use tax for your jurisdiction simply subtract 5.25 percent. (See chart below.)

California Sales and Use Tax Rates by County and City Effective July 1, 2011 (Includes state, county, local, and district taxes)

ALAMEDA CO. 8.75%
City of San Leandro 9.00%
City of Union City 9.25%
ALPINE CO. 7.25%
AMADOR CO. 7.75%
BUTTE CO. 7.25%

**CALAVERAS CO.
7.25%**
COLUSA CO. 7.25%
City of Williams 7.75%
**CONTRA COSTA CO.
8.25%**

City of Concord 8.75%
City of El Cerrito 9.25%
City of Pinole 8.75%
City of Richmond 8.75%
**DEL NORTE CO.
7.25%**

EL DORADO CO.

7.25%

City of Placerville 7.75%

City of So. Lake Tahoe

7.75%

FRESNO CO. 7.975%

City of Reedley 8.475%

City of Sanger 8.725%

City of Selma 8.475%

GLENN CO. 7.25%

HUMBOLDT CO.

7.25%

City of Arcata 8.00%

City of Eureka 8.00%

City of Trinidad 8.00%

IMPERIAL CO. 7.75%

City of Calexico 8.25%

INYO CO. 7.75%

KERN CO. 7.25%

City of Arvin 8.25%

City of Delano 8.25%

KINGS CO. 7.25%

LAKE CO. 7.25%

City of Clearlake 7.75%

City of Lakeport 7.75%

LASSEN CO. 7.25%

LOS ANGELES CO.

8.75%

City of Avalon 9.25%

City of El Monte 9.25%

City of Inglewood 9.25%

Pico Rivera 9.75%

Santa Monica 9.25%

South El Monte 9.25%

City of South Gate 9.75%

MADERA CO.

7.75%

MARIN CO. 8.00%

City of Novato 8.50%

City of San Rafael 8.50%

MARIPOSA CO. 7.75%

MENDOCINO CO.

7.25%

City of Fort Bragg 7.75%

City of Point Arena 7.75%

City of Ukiah 7.75%

City of Willits 7.75%

MERCED CO. 7.25%

City of Gustine 7.75%

City of Los Banos 7.75%

City of Merced 7.75%

MODOC CO.

7.25%

MONO CO. 7.25%

Mammoth Lakes 7.75%

MONTEREY CO. 7.25%

City of Del Rey Oaks 8.25%

City of Marina 8.25%

City of Pacific Grove 8.25%

City of Salinas 7.75%

City of Sand City 7.75%

City of Seaside 8.25%

NAPA CO. 7.75%

NEVADA CO.

7.375%

City of Nevada City 7.875%

Town of Truckee 7.875%

ORANGE CO. 7.75%

City of La Habra 8.25%

PLACER CO. 7.25%

PLUMAS CO. 7.25%

RIVERSIDE CO. 7.75%

City of Cathedral City 8.75%

SACRAMENTO CO.

7.75%

City of Galt 8.25%

SAN BENITO CO. 7.25%

City of Hollister 8.25%

City of San Juan Bautista 8.00%

SAN BERNARDINO CO.

7.75%

City of Montclair 8.00%

City of San Bernardino 8.00%

SAN DIEGO CO. 7.75%

City of El Cajon 8.75%

City of La Mesa 8.50%

City of National City 8.75%

City of Vista 8.25%

SAN FRANCISCO CO. 8.50%

SAN JOAQUIN CO. 7.75%

City of Manteca 8.25%

City of Stockton 8.00%

City of Tracy 8.25%

SAN LUIS OBISPO CO.

7.25%

City of Arroyo Grande 7.75%

City of Grover Beach 7.75%

City of Morro Bay 7.75%

City of Pismo Beach 7.75%

City of San Luis Obispo 7.75%

SAN MATEO CO. 8.25%

City of San Mateo 8.50%

SANTA BARBARA CO. 7.75%

SANTA CLARA CO. 8.25%

City of Campbell 8.50%

SANTA CRUZ CO. 8.00%

City of Capitola 8.25%

City of Santa Cruz 8.50%

City of Watsonville 8.25%

SHASTA CO. 7.25%

SIERRA CO. 7.25%

SISKIYOU CO. 7.25%

SOLANO CO. 7.375%

SONOMA CO. 8.00%

City of Cotati 8.50%

City of Rohnert Park 8.50%

City of Santa Rosa 8.50%

City of Sebastopol 8.25%

STANISLAUS CO. 7.375%

City of Ceres 7.875%

SUTTER CO. 7.25%

TEHAMA CO. 7.25%

TRINITY CO. 7.25%

TULARE CO. 7.75%

City of Dinuba 8.50%

City of Farmersville 8.25%

City of Porterville 8.25%

City of Tulare 8.25%

City of Visalia 8.00%

TUOLUMNE CO. 7.25%

City of Sonora 7.75%

VENTURA CO. 7.25%

City of Oxnard 7.75%

City of Port Hueneme 7.75%

YOLO CO. 7.25%

City of Davis 7.75%

City of West Sacramento 7.75%

City of Woodland 8.00%

YUBA CO. 7.25%

City of Wheatland 7.75%