



# CAPITOL

## comments

*“The Voice of Agriculture®”*

March 18, 2011

Week 11

### This Week at the Capitol

It is so rare to be this far into the legislative session and the budget not to be the main topic of conversation. We had another week of redistricting debate, as the joint resolution went back before the House for approval of the Senate plan. The House attached their plan that had previously been killed in the Senate and there was debate on a new Republican alternative plan. The alternative plan failed on a vote of 68 against and 54 in favor. The resolution was held on a motion to reconsider, and was tabled on Wednesday.

The Senate took up the redistricting resolution on Thursday, and voted to send it to conference with a vote of 29 in favor and 18 against. The resolution was held on a motion to reconsider. The Speaker stated that he will not appoint conferees and will proceed to the Department of Justice for pre-clearance. There was a lawsuit filed on Thursday afternoon to take the House plan to the Department of Justice.

There is a deadline of June 1 to get approved district lines or the legislators will have to run twice. It has been estimated that each election will cost the counties \$1.2 million per election. You can view the map and information by going to this website: [www.msjrc.state.ms.us](http://www.msjrc.state.ms.us). The House adjourned on Thursday and will return on Monday to resume session. The Senate did not adjourn and came back in on Friday.

### Legislative Outlook

#### Animal Cruelty

**S.B. 2821** Creates an aggravated cruelty provision for domesticated dogs and cats, where the first offense is a misdemeanor and the second offense within five years is a felony. The felony carries a maximum penalty of a \$5,000 fine and up to five years in prison. **STATUS:** S.B. 2821 the Senate invited conference and named their conferees: Sen. Tollison, Sen. Dearing, and Sen. Hopson. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

#### Farm Families

**H.B. 104** Creates a distinctive vehicle tag for the Farm Families of Mississippi. **STATUS:** H.B. 104 will go to conference between the House and Senate. No conferees have been named yet. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

#### Rice Promotion Board

**S.B. 2702** Extends the repealer on the Mississippi Rice Promotion Board. **STATUS:** S.B. 2702 the Governor signed the bill into law and is in effect now. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

### 2011 MFBF Legislative Priorities

*Production Agriculture—Much of Mississippi's economy is derived from farming or farm-related activities. Agriculture is Mississippi's largest industry worth \$6.9 billion dollars a year. In addition, agriculture makes up 34% of the workforce in Mississippi.*

*Taxation—The taxes farmers pay should be used to aid the citizens of Mississippi, but taxation must not be allowed to increase to a point that economic development is hindered.*

*Environment—In order to further conservation efforts in agriculture, attention should be focused toward economic approaches to land management.*

*Energy—The depletion of fossil fuels and the increasing energy prices have caused an emphasis to be placed on renewable fuels. Farmers have the resources through general farm practices to generate energy.*

### Legislative Outlook (Continued)

#### Emerging Crops

**H.B. 1148** Authorizes additional loans for retro-fitting agricultural enterprises. **STATUS:** H.B. 1148 has been signed by the Governor and will go into effect on July 1, 2011. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

#### Bills of Interest

#### Livestock Burial

**S.B. 2838** Allows counties to bury dead chickens if there are at least 10,000 when there is an emergency situation. **STATUS:** S.B. 2838 the House and Senate are in conference on the bill. The Senate conferees are: Sen. Browning, Sen. E. Lee, and Sen. P. Lee. The House has not named their conferees.

#### Immigration

**S.B. 2179** Creates the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhood Act of 2011, which deals with illegal immigration. **STATUS:** S.B. 2179 is in conference. The Senate conferees are: Sen. Fillingane, Sen. Dickerson, and Sen. Watson. The House conferees are: Rep. Blackmon, Rep. Cockerham, and Rep. Moak.

#### Carbon Sequestration

**S.B. 2723** Creates the Mississippi Geologic Sequestration of Carbon Dioxide Act. **STATUS:** S.B. 2723 has been sent to the Governor and the response deadline is March 23.

#### Nonprofit Act

**S.B. 2444** Creates the Mississippi Nonprofit Act that will register nonprofits. **STATUS:** S.B. 2444 has been sent to the Governor and the response deadline is March 23.

#### Agriculture Aviation

**S.B. 2871** Creates safety markings on towers for aviation. **STATUS:** S.B. 2871 the Senate concurred in the amendments from the House; the bill is on its way to the Governor.

#### Transportation

**S.B. 2192** Requires safety lights on a load of timber products projecting a certain distance beyond the end of the trailer. **STATUS:** S.B. 2192 has been sent to the Governor and the response deadline in March 23.

#### PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES BY EMAIL

To receive policy updates and newsletters by email, please log on to [www.msfb.org](http://www.msfb.org) and click on the "ag news" by email link to enter your email information. Be sure to select Public Policy as well as other subjects of interest to you from the menu, or call Tammy Meyer at 601.977.4226 and request to be added to the email list.

### 2011 Legislative Calendar

**March 24** — Deadline to concur or invite conference on general bills

**March 25** — Deadline to introduce local and private bills

**March 26** — Deadline to file conference reports on revenue and appropriations bills

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