



CAPITOL

comments

“The Voice of Agriculture®”

March 7, 2011

Week 9

This Week at the Capitol

This week was the qualifying deadline for statewide officials and county officials. There are several seats that do not have a Democratic challenger, so the real race will be in the Republican primary. We are in for an interesting election cycle with very competitive races.

Redistricting was on the top of everyone’s mind this week and last. With the deadline nearing to pass the plan, last-minute negotiating was taking place. The House unveiled their plan on Thursday and debated the plan Friday afternoon. They stayed until Saturday to table the motion to reconsider. The Senate is expected to roll out their plan sometime in the near future. You can view the map and information by going to this website: www.msjrc.state.ms.us.

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 passed the House with 119 in favor and 3 against. The bill will now go to the Senate for concurrence or to invite conference. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

Agritourism

S.B. 2695 Provides certain exemptions for people who engage in agritourism. **STATUS:** S.B. 2695 died in the House Judiciary A Committee when they failed to take it up. **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 passed out of the Senate with 48 in favor and none against. The bill will now go the House for concurrence or to invite conference. **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 passed the House with a vote of 120 in favor and 1 against. The bill will now go to the Governor. **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)

Trespass

S.B. 2705 Revises the trespass laws for trespassing on property and cropland. **STATUS:** S.B. 2705 died when the House Judiciary B Committee failed to take it up. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

Emerging Crops

H.B. 1148 Authorizes additional loans for retrofitting agricultural enterprises. **STATUS:** H.B. 1148 passed out of the Senate with 51 votes in favor and none against. The bill will now return to the House for concurrence or to invite conference. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

Bills of Interest

Groundwater Study

H.B. 1067 Directs Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to do a groundwater report by January 1, 2012. **STATUS:** H.B. 1067 died when the Senate Environmental and Water Resource Committee failed to take it up.

Livestock Burial

H.B. 983 Allows counties to bury dead chickens if there are at least 10,000 when there is an emergency situation. **STATUS:** H.B. 983 passed the Senate with 51 votes in favor and none against. The bill will now go to the House for concurrence or to invite conference.

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 passed the House with 119 in favor and 2 against. The bill will now go to the Senate for concurrence or to invite conference.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES BY EMAIL

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2011 Legislative Calendar

March 9 — Deadline to pass general bills off of the floor

March 15 — Deadline to pass appropriation and revenue bills off the floor

March 18 — Deadline to concur or invite conference on appropriation or revenue

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