

2012 SESSION

LEGISLATIVE SESSION GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES



The Oregon Farm Bureau advocates on behalf of its 8,000 farming and ranching members statewide who are professionally engaged in agriculture and represent Oregon's vast commodity diversity. OFB is a voluntary, grassroots, nonprofit organization representing the interests of the state's farmers and ranchers in the public and policymaking arenas. As Oregon's largest general farm organization, our primary goal is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for its members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole.

SIMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN OUR INVESTMENTS IN OREGON'S ECONOMIC CORNERSTONE

Safe, affordable housing for farmworkers: A critical state program expires next year, and the uncertainty over its renewal is already causing delays of much needed housing projects.

The Farm Worker Housing Tax Credit expires next year, but most projects require years of advance planning, banks and other financial institutions are becoming unwilling to move ahead on critical projects.

With new federal housing standards coming on line soon, we must renew this important credit this year. - HB 4038

Allow ODFW to Take Problem Wolves A judge has placed a stay on the Oregon Department Fish and

Wildlife taking wolves that are killing livestock. Since the injunction went into place there have been four confirmed depredations in Wallowa County. The bill would allow ODFW to take wolves that are preying on livestock. ODFW's actions would follow the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. - HB 4158

Increased access of Columbia River water

Utilizes an additional 450,000 acre feet of water from the Columbia River for agricultural and other uses to boost direct farm and food processing jobs. The proposal would generate \$1.7 billion in

personal income growth over five years, and would generate \$129 million in new tax revenues for the state. - HB 4101

Provide Sustainable harvest of Oregon State Forests

Puts Oregonians Back to Work in State Forests. Require that 95 percent of new growth in timber be harvested. Proposal would pump an additional \$441 million into the private sector through personal income growth over five years. - HB 4098

Healthy Workforce: Insure that Oregon has a stable and reliable workforce; continue to advocate for a viable guest worker program at the federal level.

DID YOU KNOW:

Today, agriculture and forestry's combined economic footprint of \$38 billion comprises about 24% of Oregon's gross domestic product and provides over 271,000 jobs. Natural resources are not just part of our heritage. A healthy natural resource community is essential for Oregon's present and future.





OREGON FARM BUREAU FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (County Payments)

The Senate has existing legislation (S-1692) that would provide for a five year extension of SRSCA at annually declining levels. Funding would begin at \$342 million (a 5% drop from the 2010/2011 funding level) and continue to ramp down by 5% per year through 2016, to \$282 Million. This reduction can be compared to the 2008 funding level of \$500 Million. This proposal was negotiated with the White House in early 2011.

It is unlikely that this legislation move as a stand-alone bill and that the legislative language will be incorporated in a much larger, more comprehensive legislative package in early 2012.

The leadership of the House Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Doc Hastings R-WA) and the leadership of the House Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health (Chairman Rob Bishop R-UT) drafted a comprehensive forest management bill that includes an extension of SRSCA and proposes to revitalize the rural economic base by significantly increasing active management of non-wilderness federal forest lands on both U.S. Forest Service and BLM lands. This bill provides "bridge funding" to counties and

schools while the U.S. Forest Service and BLM gear up for a significantly more active timber management program designed to both generate needed county and federal revenues and simultaneously address a serious backlog of forest health issues.

A second bill was introduced by Representative Martin Heinrich D-NM. This legislation, like the Senate version, proposes to extend the current SRSCA Act for 5 years at the same funding level specified in the Senate version and also contains a five year extension of PILT at 100% funding.

Farm Bill

Debate has begun on the 2012 farm bill and congressional field hearings are already under way. There is no question the existing farm bill is popular with farmers and continued maintenance of its structure is a high priority for Oregon Farm Bureau. However there is considerable acknowledgement that there will be major reforms in the upcoming reauthorization. The 2008 farm bill was carefully constructed to provide predictable support for commodity, conservation, nutrition and export promotion programs. Three-fourths of the CBO estimated price tag for the entire farm bill is for nutrition programs rather than for commodity, conservation and export programs—

the three programs most often referred to as the traditional "farm programs."

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) Cell Phone Restriction

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) ban on hand held cellular phones took effect on Jan. 3, 2012. Drivers operating a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) in interstate commerce who violate the restriction will face federal civil penalties of up to \$2,750 for each offense and disqualification from operating a CMV for multiple offenses. Additionally, states will suspend a driver's Commercial Driver's License (CDL) after two or more serious traffic violations.

Agriculture is not specifically exempt from this rule. The cell phone rule applies to anyone operating a CMV in interstate commerce whether or not a CDL is required. Interstate commerce is considered to have occurred if the final destination of goods is beyond the state borders even if you have only transported it within the state (i.e.: grain elevator, port, train, truck, etc.).

Budget and Appropriations

The Office of Management and Budget will release the president's budget request on Feb. 13.

USDA Closures

The U.S. Agriculture Department announced it will close nearly 260 offices nationwide in an effort to save dollars. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the goal was to save \$150 million a year in the agency's \$145 billion budget. The plan calls for 259 offices, labs and other facilities to be closed, affecting the USDA headquarters in Washington and operations in 46 states. The implications in Oregon are that offices in Tillamook, Clatsop, Polk and Grant County will see closures.