



CAPITOL

comments

“The Voice of Agriculture®”

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Week 10

This Week at the Capitol

The talk of the Capitol this week was redistricting. The House redistricting plan passed the House on Saturday then went before the Senate Election Committee. The Senate Election Committee tabled the plan, effectively killing the House map. The Senate Election Committee also passed an alternative plan known as the “Bryant Plan” from the plan that the Joint Redistricting Committee passed on Monday.

The Senate debated the two redistricting proposals on Thursday. The Bryant Plan was debated for around two hours and failed by a vote of 16 in favor and 35 against. There were two amendments offered to the original plan, one was to renumber the Senate districts in order, starting in Desoto County and that amendment failed. The other amendment was to keep the House and Senate plans together when they go before the Department of Justice so that if one fails then both would fail. That amendment passed.

The original Senate plan passed the Senate with 44 in favor and 7 against, with Senator Gordon absent. The bill was held on a motion to reconsider. That motion must be tabled before the bill can go back to the House. 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 is in the Senate waiting for concurrence or to invite conference. **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-Governor Barbour has until March 14 to sign this bill into law or the bill becomes law automatically. **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 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

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 has been sent to the Governor. The Senate concurred with the amendments that the House made.

Nonprofit Act

S.B. 2444 Creates the Mississippi Nonprofit Act that will register nonprofits. **STATUS:** S.B. 2444 passed the House and has been transmitted back to the Senate.

Agriculture Aviation

S.B. 2871 Creates safety markings on towers for aviation. **STATUS:** S.B. 2871 has been amended and returned to the Senate to concur or to invite conference.

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 passed the House and has been transmitted to the Senate.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES BY EMAIL

To receive policy updates and newsletters by email, please log on to 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 15 — Deadline to pass appropriation and revenue bills off the floor

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

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

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