



CAPITOL

comments

“The Voice of Agriculture”

March 30, 2010

Week 12

Wrap-Up on General Bills

The Legislature worked well into the afternoon on Saturday, and finished their work with general bills. They adjourned on Saturday until April at 1:00 p.m. When they return on the 20th, they will work on the budget. The Legislature will still be in the regular session, having gone home early on several occasions.

It is the hope of the Legislature, when they return, to know how much money will be given to the state to help fund Medicaid from the Federal government. The state is projected to receive around \$187 million. This could potentially free up money to fund other state agencies.

An agreement was reached between the House and the Governor on reauthorizing the Department of Employment Securities on Saturday. The House passed the legislation, and now it will go to the Senate for further consideration. The Senate will consider the legislation when they return in April.

Legislative Outlook

Sweet Potatoes

H.B. 1681 Authorizes a guaranteed loan program administered through MDA for sweet potato farmers. **STATUS:** H.B. 1681—The Governor signed the bill. The language was reinserted in another bill and some additional changes were made to the law in S.B. 3184. S.B. 3184 was passed by the House and Senate and sent to the Governor. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

Boll Weevil

S.B. 2836 Revises the Boll Weevil Eradication Program to a post-eradication statewide program and a simple majority vote. **STATUS:** S.B.2836—The House and Senate passed the conference report. The bill will now go to the Governor. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

Cotton Warehouse Tax

S.B. 2636 Diverts the cotton warehouse tax to the Boll Weevil Management Board. **STATUS:** S.B. 2636—The Senate concurred with the House amendment and the bill has been sent to the Governor. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

Farmers’ Market

H.B. 1566 Clarifies sales tax provision regarding products sold at farmers’ markets that are certified by the Department of Agriculture. **STATUS:** H.B. 1566—The Governor’s response deadline is April 1, 2010, to sign the bill. **Farm Bureau policy supports this bill.**

2010 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 \$5.5 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

MSU Funding

S.B. 3122 MSU Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station appropriation for FY 2011. **STATUS:** S.B. 3122 —The Senate invited conference on the bill. The Senate conferees have been named: Sen. Nunnelee, Sen. Davis, Sen. G. Jackson. The House conferees have been named: Rep. Stringer, Rep. Ward, Rep. Eaton. The bill will continue to be addressed when the Legislature comes back on April 20.

MSU Funding

S.B. 3123 MSU Cooperative Extension Service appropriation for FY 2011. **STATUS:** S.B. 3123—The Senate invited conference on the bill. The Senate conferees have been named: Sen. Nunnelee, Sen. Davis, Sen. G. Jackson. The House conferees have been named: Rep. Stringer, Rep. Ward, Rep. Warren. The bill will continue to be addressed when the Legislature comes back on April 20.

MSU Funding

S.B. 3124 MSU Forest and Wildlife Research appropriation for FY 2011. **STATUS:** S.B. 3124—The Senate invited conference on the bill. The Senate conferees have been named: Sen. Nunnelee, Sen. Davis, Sen. G. Jackson. The House conferees have been named: Rep. Stringer, Rep. Eaton, Rep. M. Huddleston. The bill will continue to be addressed when the Legislature comes back on April 20.

MSU Funding

S.B. 3125 MSU College of Veterinary Medicine appropriation for FY 2011. **STATUS:** S.B. 3125—The Senate invited conference on the bill. The Senate conferees have been named: Sen. Nunnelee, Sen. Davis, Sen. G. Jackson. The House conferees have been named: Rep. Stringer, Rep. Ward, Rep. Eaton. The bill will continue to be addressed when the Legislature comes back on April 20.

Bills of Interest

LLC Fee

H.B. 683 Allows the Secretary of State to charge a registration fee for LLCs and to use the money for election equipment in the counties. **STATUS:** H.B. 683—The House and Senate filed a conference report. On the third attempt to pass a conference report, the House and Senate were successful in passing the bill.

Wild Hogs

S.B. 2919 Prohibits the transportation of live wild hogs caught by hunting or trapping in the state. **STATUS:** H.B. 2919—The House and Senate filed a conference report. The House and Senate passed the conference report. The bill will now go to the Governor.

Bond Bill

H.B. 1701 Authorizes bonds for various purposes and provides certain incentives. This bill includes bond money for roads and bridges and MSU Division of Agriculture, among other interests. **STATUS:** H.B. 1701—The House and Senate filed and passed a conference report. The bill will now go to the Governor.

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