



June 1, 2007

Efforts continue on S. 1348 – Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007

*By Aubrey Cairns
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The debate over comprehensive immigration reform continued this week. Over 100 amendments to S. 1348 have been proposed and are being debated.

Rejected last Thursday was an amendment to strike Title VI—work authorization and legalization of undocumented individuals. Subsection B of Title VI is the AgJOBS program. The amendment was rejected with a 66-29 vote. Senators Feinstein and Boxer rejected this amendment, helping to keep the AgJOBS provision intact.

President Bush continues to advocate for S. 1348, speaking in favor of it on Tuesday in Georgia. The President made three key points: 1) Under S. 1348, temporary and Z Visas will not be issued until meaningful benchmarks for border security and worksite enforcement are met; 2) The bill assigns the most resources to border safety and security in U.S. history; and 3) The bill recognizes that enforcement alone will not work to secure the borders and meet the needs of the U.S. economy. A complete transcript of the speech can be found at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070529-7.html>.

As harvest for many commodities comes into full swing throughout the next months, labor will become increasingly important. Contact your Congressman and Senator now to let them know why this bill is so important. (A list of elected officials is attached to this fax.)

State water pumps stop

The CA Department of Water Resources announced Thursday it will stop pumping at State Water Project (SWP) facilities in the Delta to provide maximum protection for Delta smelt. This action follows the observed entrainment of juvenile smelt between May 25 and May 31 at the Harvey O. Banks pumping plant facility.

Deliveries to Southern California and agricultural users in the San Joaquin Valley who are

able to receive supplies from San Luis Reservoir will not be affected in the immediate term. They could see impacts on their supplies if the shutdown lasts for an extended time and DWR is unable to make up for lost Delta pumping later.

Although there are no SWP contracts in Fresno County, the California Aqueduct does wheel water for the County's west side and the federal Central Valley Project does have pumping facilities near the state pumps. Likewise, water transfers from the SWP and/or conveyed via the Delta to water users within the county could be vulnerable. Of added concern could be the impact this can have on next year's allocation for south of Delta federal water users.

Jeff McCracken, of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, said the federal CVP pumps are down to one in operation at 850 cfs and have been at that level during most of May because of the VAMP management agreement. The low-level of pumping is primarily to serve water users between the federal pumps and San Luis Reservoir, including the City of Tracy, which receives half of its supply from the CVP.

McCracken said there currently is about 437,000 acre-feet of federal allocation in San Luis Reservoir. "We will try to get through these next seven days and see where we are," he said. The Bureau is looking at ways to increase the flows in the lower San Joaquin River (in the northern San Joaquin Valley) as a way to avoid reverse flows, and the agency is looking at "engineering things" to see what can be done to increase flows in the river so federal water users can pull their allocation from there. The agency is keeping close watch on the combined federal-state draw-down from pumping out of San Luis Reservoir to maintain dam safety and integrity.

DWR Director Lester Snow said, "While there are clearly many factors at play in the current decline of smelt we must act on the one that is within our control. That is why DWR will stop pumping in the Delta as a preventative measure to protect threatened fish that are currently located near our facilities."

Scientific studies indicate that pelagic (top and middle layers of the sea) fish are affected by many stressors. Water project operations can affect fish; however, invasive species, toxics, and diversion

by many other water users in the Delta have dramatic effects on these fish.

This year's water quality events in the Sacramento River system in the Delta occurred at a time and location where adult Delta smelt were concentrated and spawning. The extremely low numbers of young smelt, identified earlier this month, are likely a direct result of these toxic events. DWR will collaborate with other agencies to evaluate water conditions in the Delta and health and safety needs for water users.

The State Water Project supplies water to 25 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland.

Remember: new rules in place while transporting bees and metals on county roads

By Aubrey Cairns

FCFB Issues Coordinator

In March, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors created an ordinance that a transporter of bees or metals on county roads must meet certain requirements. The ordinance, which went into effect on April 26, was in response to high incidents of bee and metal thefts reported in the county. The new ordinance states:

Bees

Anyone transporting "apiary equipment" (any hive, any portion of the hive commonly referred to as the lid, shallow honey super, upper deep (food chamber), frame, honeycomb, and bottom board), on any public road in Fresno County shall have in the person's possession a valid bill of sale for the bees and/or apiary equipment or a written permission issued by the owner of the bees and/or apiary equipment authorizing the transportation. A bill of sale or written permission shall include:

1. The name, address, phone number and signature of the person either selling the bees and/or apiary equipment or authorizing the transportation of the bees and/or apiary equipment;
2. A description sufficient to identify the property that the person is transporting is the property that was either sold to them or they were given permission to transport; and
3. The date of issuance of the bill of sale or the written permission to transport.

If caught without proper identification, a peace officer will take custody of the bees and/or apiary equipment.

Metals

Anyone transporting "metals" (any wire, cable, copper, lead, solder, mercury, iron, aluminum, stainless steel or brass), that are in a finished product, new item of merchandisable quality, or materials in such a state or condition as to show they were neither abandoned nor scrapped, upon any public road in Fresno County shall have in the person's possession a valid bill of sale for the metal or written permission issued by the owner of the metal authorizing the transportation of metal. The bill of sale or written permission shall include:

1. The name, address, phone number and signature of the person either selling metal or authorizing the transportation of the metal;
2. A description sufficient to identify the property that the person is transporting is the property that was either sold to them or they were given permission to transport;
3. The date of issuance of the bill of sale or the written permission to transport.

A peace office will take custody of such metals if a person is caught transporting them without the proper identification.

Metal Theft and Junk Dealer Update

On May 8, an amendment to Fresno County Ordinance 6.24.120 was passed by the Board of Supervisors, requiring junk dealers to submit at least once a week all dealer's invoices which will include:

1. The place and date of each sale or purchase made in the conduct of his or her business;
2. The full name, valid driver's license number and state of issue or California-issued identification card number, and vehicle license number of any motor vehicle and trailer used in transporting materials;
3. The name and address of each person to whom materials are sold to or disposed of, and the license number of any motor vehicle used in transporting the materials from the place of business;
4. A full, true, and detailed description of the items or materials purchased or sold, including the item type, quantity, and identification number, if visible;
5. A statement indicating either that the seller of the materials is the owner of it, or the name of the person

he or she obtained it from, as shown on a signed transfer document;

6. Full name and signature of person(s) authorizing transaction; and

7. A clearly legible thumbprint of the seller of the material.

At the May 22 Board of Supervisors meeting, the Supervisors passed an ordinance that requires junk dealers to make payment for scrap metal only by check to a physical address provided on the seller's driver's license or other identification record in the transaction record, no sooner than three days after the transaction. The ordinance goes into effect on June 21.

On Tuesday, June 5, a new ordinance requiring junk dealers to place a five-day hold on all non-ferrous metal and stainless steel will go before the Board of Supervisors for a first reading.

Land use workshop held at FCFB

On Wednesday, the Fresno County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) hosted a "Spheres of Influence (SOI) Workshop" at the Fresno County Farm Bureau. Presentations were made by Carol Whiteside, of the Great Valley Center; Bob Braitman, of Braitman & Associates; Greg Kirkpatrick, from the City of Visalia; Tony Boren, of the Council of Fresno County Governments; Darrel Schmidt, of Fresno LAFCo; and Bernard Jimenez, of the County of Fresno.

The speakers discussed addressing the Valley's land use problems as a region, instead of as smaller jurisdictions; the role of LAFCo and SOI; the preservation of agricultural lands; planning for Fresno County's Future Growth; how to prepare for an SOI update; and the County of Fresno's role in the SOI update process.

LAFCos are responsible for coordinating changes in local governmental boundaries, conducting special studies that review ways to reorganize, simplify, and streamline governmental structure and preparing a sphere of influence for each city and special district within each county.

The Commission's efforts are directed toward seeing that services are provided efficiently and economically while agricultural and open-space lands are protected. The Fresno LAFCo is now accessible online at www.fresnolafco.org. Information regarding the role of LAFCo, hearing and workshop dates and times, and applications and documents are all available through this website.

Federal Farm Bill discussions underway in Congress

Congress has begun work to rewrite federal agricultural policy, as House subcommittees are discussing individual portions of the Federal Farm Bill.

The federal food and agricultural policy is re-worked every five years, and discussions are expected to continue through June. Preliminary discussions indicate that this Farm Bill may include more components of interest and benefit to California producers.

California Farm Bureau Federation is focusing on new market opportunities for the state's specialty crops and looking for ways to help improve the economic viability for the state's farmers and ranchers. Some of the programs CFBF is promoting are:

- * Expansion of conservation programs to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gasses and improvement in air quality, and to exclude Conservation Program Payments from Adjusted Gross Income limitation to expand participation of California producers.

- * Expand nutritional programs that encourage better nutrition and greater consumption of ALL U.S. grown products, including more fruits and vegetables in school lunch and other programs.

- * Increase consumer awareness by implementing Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling that provides consumers with the tools and resources to make informed purchasing decisions, specifically about where their food is grown.

- * Expand energy opportunities that utilize agricultural byproducts.

- * Strengthen pest and disease exclusion programs by returning authority for pest and disease exclusion and detection programs at our points of entry to USDA/APHIS.

- * Increase trade promotion and development through increased funds for the Market Access Program to \$325 million and programs that allow California producers to tackle unfair non-tariff trade barriers.

Protect employee secret ballot choice on unionization

Urge a no vote on SB180

A legislative effort is underway to take away the right of employees to use a secret ballot in voting for union representation. SB 180 has passed out of

the CA State Senate and now it heads to the Assembly. This is just the second step in a three-step process, where it may very well go to the Governor to sign or veto.

California Farm Bureau Federation's FARM TEAM is urging members to contact their Assembly representatives to urge a no vote on SB 180, which would undermine the current provision of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act that guarantees and protects the rights of agricultural employees, employers and unions.

Senator Migden's (D-San Francisco) bill strips farm employees of their rights by replacing a secret-ballot election with an unprotected process called "majority sign-up election." Not only does this process undermine the right of employees to cast their ballot in a secure, private election booth free from coercion, but also deprives them the opportunity to hear and consider other viewpoints on unionization. Also, this bill also would impose a civil penalty on employers of up to \$20,000 for specific unfair labor practices. Please urge your Assembly Member to vote No on SB 180.

Ag Labor and Employment Summit set for June 12 on Westside

The Center for Agricultural Business is sponsoring an agricultural labor and employment summit on Tuesday, June 12 at the Harris Ranch Garden Ball Room near Coalinga. The event begins with a breakfast buffet at 7:30 a.m., followed by programs until 12:30 p.m.

The summit is sponsored by AgSafe, Center for Agricultural Business, California Agricultural Technology Institute at California State University, Fresno

A panel of industry experts will take a look at a real life safety incident involving an agricultural workplace. Representatives from the various points of view will discuss the implications of the incident and the impact to the employer. Participants will learn how to prepare for the legal ramifications to citations, to the personal and economic costs involved with the incident, and how to respond and manage the tough questions.

In addition, speakers will discuss effective ways to communicate with non-English speaking employees originally from Mexico and Central America and to help them become aware of safety practices and regulations. Also, speakers will provide

employers with important tools to improve in legal compliance and loss control; increased productivity and efficiency through the use of employee handbooks; and the importance of strong record keeping practices and ongoing internal monitoring and audits.

The cost to attend is AgSafe member rate \$45; non-member rate \$55 before June 6. Late/walk-in registration (after June 6) is AgSafe member rate \$55; non-member rate \$65. For details, call the Center for Agricultural Business at (559) 278-4405, or visit: www.cati.csufresno.edu/cab.

Did you know???

- * The average number of people airborne over the US any given hour: 61,000
- * Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what? Their birthplace
- * What is the only food that doesn't spoil? Honey
- * The name Jeep came from the abbreviation used in the army for the "General Purpose" vehicle; G.P.
- * An average person laughs about 15 times a day.
May your day be filled with many laughs! If you have a fun trivia item or joke to share, please email it to lizh@fcfb.org. Thanks!

This Week's Calendar

- May 28** Memorial Day Holiday.
- May 30** Fresno County LAFCo Workshop
- May 31** FCFB/State Fund Heat Stress Prevention Seminar

Next Week's Calendar

- June 5** CDFA California Organic Program, 8 a.m., FCFB office, 1274 W. Hedges Ave.; San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District Citizens Advisory Committee, 10 a.m., Air District office
- June 6** Fresno County Ag Lands Conservation Committee, 8 a.m., FCFB office
- June 7** FCFB Board of Directors meeting, 6 p.m., FCFB office

Fresno County
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<http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm#form>

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