



June 8, 2007

Immigration Reform Update

Comprehensive immigration reform remained a hot topic in the U.S. Senate with S. 1348 (Reid), The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, being debated this week. More than 21 amendments have been made to S. 1348, which still includes the AgJOBS provision. One of the proposed amendments was a motion to strike the AgJOBS language, but it was overwhelmingly rejected with Senators Boxer and Feinstein voting no.

Late Wednesday, the Senate voted 49-48 to sunset the Y-1 nonimmigrant visa program, also known as a guest-worker program, after a five-year period. This means that no alien could be issued a visa after five years from when the first visa was issued. This amendment does not affect Y-2B non-immigrants under the AgJOBS Act of 2007. Senator Boxer voted for the amendment and Senator Feinstein voted against the amendment.

On Tuesday, Senator Reid filed a cloture motion. The motion would have ended the debate in the Senate. However, on Thursday, the Senate failed to meet the votes needed to move the bill forward. With a vote of 63-33 the compromise made between Senate leaders and the White House is looking bleak.

However, the agricultural industry is continuing its efforts to push for timely resolution to the immigration measure, including maintaining the integrity of the AgJOBS component. Please continue to contact members of the U.S. Senate to support the AgJOBS provision of the comprehensive immigration reform package.

State pumps to start on Sunday

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) issued a news release today that states limited pumping will resume at its Harvey O. Banks Delta Pump Sunday, June 10, to meet critical water supply needs primarily for urban water users.

The department will gradually resume operations at the State Water Project (SWP) pump. The state pumps have been shut down since May 31 because of the Endangered Species Act-protected Delta smelt, a fish of no commercial value but is believed to be an indicator of Delta conditions.

"We will be pumping at bare minimum levels and tweaking our delivery system to meet the essential needs of communities in the South Bay and elsewhere," said DWR Director Lester Snow.

According to DWR, as the Delta smelt continue their seasonal migration downstream, the department on Sunday will begin slowly drawing water to its pumps from water already in Clifton Court Forebay. During this two-day operation, no water will be diverted from the Delta into the forebay, although some Delta smelt already in the forebay may be salvaged at the Skinner Fish Protective Facility.

Throughout the pumping restart, DWR and the Department of Fish and Game will closely monitor Delta smelt in the area. The agencies will continue day-to-day evaluation of impact on this species to determine if pumping should continue.

During the first two days of resumed pumping, water will be moved from Clifton Court Forebay to Bethany Reservoir, a small reservoir that supplies the South Bay Pumping Plant. After approximately two days of moving existing water from Clifton Court Forebay, additional Delta water will be allowed to flow in to refill the forebay.

It is expected that initial pumping will average about 100 cubic feet per second (cfs), about 90 percent less than is normally pumped this time of year.

"This is a very important wakeup call for California. We must implement Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to fix the Delta through the Strategic Growth Plan and Delta Vision process," Snow said.

For all intents and purposes, the limited restart of the state pumps does not mean that agricultural water users south of the Delta are out of the woods. Both SWP and CVP agricultural water districts are concerned with just how low San Luis Reservoir storage will go and are closely monitoring the situation.

Pump shut-off of concern to Fresno County farmers

The shut-down of California's major water delivery network in the Delta has caused serious

angst for Fresno County farmers who rely on imported water from the Delta to irrigate their crops.

Farmers in Westlands Water District, which has a contract for more than 1-million acre-feet of water from the federal Central Valley Project, have expressed understandable concern over the loss of valuable pumping on the state project and greatly reduced pumping on the federal side.

Although state pumping is scheduled to be restored on a limited basis on Sunday, the continued draining of San Luis Reservoir during the past 10 days -- where Westlands' and other water users' water is stored -- has raised serious concerns about the reliability of the already limited water supply this summer (50 percent allocation), as well as the integrity of the dam itself.

Likewise, the 10-day shut-down has already caused hardships for some farmers. This week, reports have been made about young cotton plantings being disced-up to free-up the intended water allocation for other crops, as well as unheard-of prices upwards of \$500-plus per acre-foot for water transfers on the open market. Of great concern is the impact the shut-down may have on next year's water supply, given unknown precipitation this coming winter.

Prior to DWR's announcement today, Riverdale area grower Mark Borba said, "This shut-down has the potential to become the equivalent to the 'Orange Freeze' for our west side communities."

The situation clearly illustrates the urgent necessity to fix a broken Delta and the need for additional conveyance and surface water storage facilities in this state.

Consolidated Irrigation District cancels irrigation runs for 2007

Water woes for Fresno County growers know no boundaries this year. For only the third time in the history of the Consolidated Irrigation District, farmers and ranchers in the eastern Fresno County water district will receive no surface water this year.

Dry winter and spring conditions caused CID Board of Directors to cancel plans for the District's primary 2007 water deliveries -- the third time since canal service began in 1878 that no water run will take place.

"The Board took this action very reluctantly," said CID General Manager Mark Gilkey. "The supply just isn't there to be able to fill the canals and provide

a turn to each grower." Consolidated will be the largest Kings River agency to be unable to operate this year. Those that are operating will have very short seasons.

The District's system serves 143,000 acres in the Sanger, Parlier, Del Rey, Fowler, Kingsburg, Selma, Bowles, Monmouth and Caruthers areas, and west of Reedley, and small portions of Tulare and Kings counties.

The most recent CA Department of Water Resources forecast for the peak April-July runoff period expects Kings River flows to total just 38 percent of average, or 460,000 acre-feet (assuming average amounts of precipitation fall in June and July).

This year's precipitation is in sharp contrast to the previous two consecutive "wet" years. During that time, CID was able to percolate more than 175,000 acre-feet of water into its ponds for underground recharge of the aquifer while making longer-than-usual irrigation deliveries due to above-average Kings River water supplies.

Consolidated currently is providing water deliveries through its Lone Tree Channel system to 8,000 acres mostly south and southwest of Sanger with historic "Church" rights.

New regulations enforced for ag haulers

The California Highway Patrol has implemented new federal regulations for agricultural haulers.

Now banned are the use of corner irons, cleats and longitudinal binders and cables to secure agricultural loads. The only approved method to secure loads now is the use of lateral straps every 10 feet, which is ineffective and dangerous when hauling hay bales, bins, tubs and boxes.

A public hearing will be held on June 27, at 9 a.m. at the CHP office in Sacramento to discuss how the new regulations impact agricultural loads. Contact your legislator and the Governor now, to urge an exemption for agricultural commodities until a workable and safe solution can be developed.

Heavy Duty Incentive Program

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is accepting applications requesting monetary incentives to replace current vehicles with newer reduced-emission vehicles. More information and an

application can be found at www.valleyair.org under the "Grants and Incentives" tab. There is a high demand for this program. Fill out your application today!

County Metal Ordinance Update

On Tuesday, a new ordinance requiring junk dealers to place a five-day hold on all non-ferrous metal and stainless steel went before the Board of Supervisors for a first reading. The ordinance passed unanimously. The second reading is set for June 12 and will go into effect 30 days later.

For details, contact Aubrey Cairns, FCFB issues coordinator, at aubreyc@fcfb.org or call (559) 237-0263.

Fresno State Farm Market to feature local turkey products

Beginning this week, locally produced turkey products will be sold at the popular Fresno State Farm Market.

A new poultry management project at Fresno State teamed-up with Zacky Farms of Fresno, resulting in student-produced turkeys sold at the university's Farm Market. Richard Zacky, owner of Zacky Farms, joined animal science professor Michelle Ganci, who oversees the poultry unit, Dr. Art Parham, Animal Science Department chair, and Dr. Charles Boyer, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology at a kick-off event on Thursday to showcase the new "Fresno State Young Turkeys" freezer display.

The project, intended to promote a better understanding of the poultry industry, places 12-to-24 qualified students in a summer intern program at Zacky Farms' downtown Fresno processing plant and its various facilities as part of a poultry management course through the Animal Science Department in Fresno State's College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. Held in the spring, the course began three years ago.

For the project, students raise the turkeys on the campus farm under the guidance of faculty members and with financial and technical support from Zacky farms. The birds were processed at Zacky Farms and are being sold at the Farm Market through the University Farm's poultry enterprise. The enterprise is one of 20 on the campus farm.

The turkeys are labeled "Fresno State Young Turkeys" and will sell for \$1.09 a pound in the Farm Market. As with all student farm products, proceeds help strengthen Fresno State's teaching and research programs in agriculture.

The Farm Market's summer hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information: (559) 278-4511. By the way, the sweet corn is in at the market!

Quote of the week

In light of all of the immigration discussion currently going on, Here's something to think about:

When asked by one of his Parliament members why he believes so much in America England's Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "A simple way to take measure of a country is to look at how many want in... And how many want out."

This Week's Calendar

June 5 CDFCA California Organic Program; San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District Citizens Advisory Committee

June 7 FCFB Board of Directors meeting

Next Week's Calendar

June 11 FACT Class IV "Graduation", 9 a.m., FCFB office, 1274 W. Hedges Ave.

June 12 FCFB Public Relations Committee, noon, FCFB office

June 13 Fresno Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee meeting, noon, Chamber office; Operation Clean Air Board of Directors, 4 p.m.

June 14 Central Valley Water Awareness Committee meeting, noon; Metro Rural Loop Corridor Preservation Feasibility Study, 1 p.m., Smittcamp Alumni House, Fresno State; Friant Millerton Regional Plan Area follow-up meeting, 2 p.m.

June 15 Fresno County Legislative and Media Agricultural Tour, 8 a.m. FCFB office, Details: (559) 237-0263

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