

RURAL DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL SECURITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Terry Peach, Chairman

Commissioner, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry

2008 Midyear Legislative Conference

Sunday, February 10

Update on Energy and Bioenergy Issues:

Matt Hartwig of the Renewable Fuels Association provided an update on the ethanol industry and its impact on agriculture. He provided preliminary information on the use of ethanol and informed the committee that the information will be available at the end of the month. The RFA will meet February 26-27, 2008, and the final report will be issued during that meeting and will be posted on its website at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/>. In addition, renewable fuel information is also posted at <http://www.renewablefuelsnow.org/>.

Update on Immigration Reform Legislation and Activities:

Craig Regelbrugge, Co-Chair, Agricultural Coalition on Immigration Reform and Vice President of Government Relations and Research for the American Nursery and Landscape Association provided an update on AgJOBS legislation and the proposed changes to the H2A workers program announced last week by the Administration. His presentation will be available for NASDA members.

Update on Transportation Legislation regarding agricultural vehicles was provided by Paul Schlegel, Director of Public Policy, American Farm Bureau Federation. He informed the committee that Farm Bureau supports H.R. 3098, introduced by Representative Boren (OK) and cosponsored by Representatives Aderholt (AL) and Fallin (OK). The legislation would provide certain exemptions to drivers of intrastate commercial motor vehicles engaged in agricultural purposes.

Policy Amendments and Action Items

The committee recommended that the following Policy Amendments and Action Items be considered by the NASDA membership:

Policy Amendment No. 4, carbon emission cap and trade system with amendments;

Policy Amendment No. 5, updated Energy Policy statement;

Action Item E, regarding rail competition with amendments;

Policy Amendment No. 7, regarding Tobacco Policy update;

Policy Amendment No. 8 and related Action Item, regarding transportation and movement of agricultural vehicles;

Action Item G, regarding H2B workers;

Action Item F, regarding an EPA waiver for an E20 ethanol blend (jointly referred to Natural Resources and Pesticide Management Committee)

Withdrawn - Policy Amendment No. 6, river transportation.

Committee Plans

The committee will continue to follow the progress regarding renewable energy and bioenergy issues, immigration reform, transportation issues and grain warehouse issues. The Warehouse Working Group reported to the committee that it will undertake efforts to increase communication with USDA, National Conference of State Legislators, National Governors Association and various agricultural groups in the coming months about NASDA's position on grain warehouse policy and the state/federal cooperation.