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Subject: The Barbed Wire - May 01, 2015
Date: May 1, 2015 at 10:56 AM
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Your source for legislative and regulatory news impacting California's rural counties.

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ACTION ALERT: RCRC Urges Member County Opposition on AB 1315

This week, Assembly Bill 1315 by Assemblymember Luis Alejo (D-Salinas) passed out of the Assembly Local Government Committee on a 8-0 vote. AB 1315 is sponsored by a coalition of contractor organizations including the Associated General Contractors and Construction Employers Association.

RCRC and a coalition of local public agencies voiced strong opposition to the bill which would prohibit public agencies from delegating to a contractor the development of a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), water pollution control program, or any other plan required by a Regional Water Board to prevent or reduce water pollution or runoff on a public works project. The bill will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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New Approach for Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Announced

Governor Brown, along with other state and federal officials, announced this week a new approach for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The revised approach is known as

California EcoRestore and California WaterFix (Alternative A4), and replaces the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

California EcoRestore will pursue 30,000 plus acres of fish and wildlife habitat restoration over the next five years. Proposition 1 funds and other state public dollars will be directed for public benefits unassociated with any regulatory compliance responsibilities. California WaterFix will include ~2,100 acres of habitat restoration to mitigate for the construction and operation of new water facilities. These costs will be paid for by water agencies benefiting from the project.

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The Water Rundown

Proposed Drought-Related Emergency Regulations Available for Review and Comment

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has released for review their proposed drought-related emergency regulations requiring a 25 percent water conservation standard. The proposed regulations, a fact sheet, and proposed urban water usage tiers can be accessed [here](#).

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Administration to Propose Water Conservation Enforcement Legislation

In a meeting with mayors earlier this week, the Governor announced he will propose legislation to help local officials enforce conservation requirements, and will direct state agencies to streamline environmental review of local water supply projects. The proposed legislation will give new enforcement authority to local entities that don't currently have it, and increase potential penalties against water wasters.

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North Coast Water Board Proposes Environmental Requirements on Marijuana Growers

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has released draft Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for marijuana cultivation activities for public review and comment. The proposal, which has been in development for several months, is the first in California to impose new environmental requirements on cannabis growers, and could serve as a model for similar programs in other regions. A public workshop has been scheduled for May 7, 2015 in Eureka, and comments are due by June 8, 2015.

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State Agencies to Implement Water Energy Technology Program

The California Energy Commission (Energy Commission), in conjunction with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), will initiate a Water Energy Technology (WET) program to provide funding for technologies that meet certain criteria including significant water savings, energy savings, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the areas of agriculture, commercial, residential, and water treatment and recovery.

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State Update

RCRC Chair Testifies on Resources Related Bills

On Monday, RCRC Chair Lee Adams (Sierra County) was in Sacramento to testify on behalf of RCRC in support of two Natural Resources-related bills, Assembly Bill 590 by Assemblymember Brian Dahle (R-Bieber), and Assembly Bill 1142 by Assemblymember Adam Gray (D-Merced).

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Federal Update

Bipartisan Senate Bill Calls for New Clean Water Rule

Key members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee have introduced a bill to halt the pending rule regarding Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) and to provide direction to the federal agencies for drafting a substitute rule. The draft Senate bill is more prescriptive than legislation (H.R. 1732) now being considered in the House, which would force repeal of the proposed rule and require a new rulemaking process that engages state and local governments. The Senate bill lists waters that should be exempted from designation as WOTUS, including facilities that store, treat, or convey storm water, wastewater, water supply, and agriculture. However, these provisions are recommendations, not statutory requirements, for the agencies to consider when rewriting the rule. The bill has bipartisan cosponsors and is expected to be voted on by the Committee in the coming months.

Senate Environment and Public Works Passes EPA 'Secret Science' Bill

Earlier this week, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved S. 544, "The Secret Science Reform Act," on a party line vote of 11-9. S. 544 would prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from finalizing rules that are based on science that is not "transparent or reproducible." It would also compel EPA to make publicly available all the studies and data that go into its rulemakings. Last month, the House passed its version of the bill (H.R. 1030), also mostly along party lines, despite a White House veto threat. In its veto threat against the House bill, the White House said that the legislation would impose "arbitrary, unnecessary and expensive requirements."

House Panel Votes Down Attempt to Strike Sage Grouse Language

On Wednesday, the House Armed Services Committee voted against striking a provision from the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would deny the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) from a potential listing of the sage grouse for the next ten years. In a 26-36 vote, Committee Republicans were able to vote in defense of the language. The potential listing of the sage grouse continues to be one of the most contentious endangered species listings in recent years. The USFWS recently announced their decision not to list the California/Nevada distinct population of the species as endangered, but a general listing of the species may still have impacts within the state.

FY 2016 Energy & Water Spending Bill on House Floor

The House is considering the FY 2016 Energy and Water Appropriations measure. H.R. 2028 would provide fiscal 2016 funding for the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Department of Energy. The bill would boost overall energy and water spending by \$1.2 billion over fiscal 2015 enacted levels. The legislation's total price tag is \$35.4 billion.

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House Appropriations Subcommittee Approves FY 2016 Transportation and Housing Bill

This week, the House Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development approved the FY 2016 funding bill for federal transportation and housing programs. The bill would decrease transportation funding by \$1 billion over 2015 levels, and increase funding for housing programs by \$1 billion.

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Bulletin Board

State Board of Food and Agriculture Drought Forum (Fresno)

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Legislative Update

RCRC members are encouraged to share letters addressed to state and federal representatives and regulatory bodies with RCRC's Government Affairs staff. Click "Read More" to access information related to the current status of legislation impacting California's rural counties.

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Regulatory Update

RCRC members are encouraged to submit comments on regulatory matters to state and federal regulatory bodies, and to provide a copy to RCRC's Government Affairs staff. Click "Read More" to access information related to the current status of regulations impacting California's rural counties.

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California Drought

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