

Capitol LINK

CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE & AGRI-BUSINESS

May 2008

Governor's Global Warming Task Force Recommends Voluntary Emissions Reduction Programs for Agriculture

By Jordan Lamb

In April of 2007, Governor Doyle signed [Executive Order 191](#), which established a Task Force on Global Warming comprised of Wisconsin business, industry, government, energy and environmental representatives who were tasked with examining the effects of, and solutions to, global warming in Wisconsin. The Task Force is required to submit a final plan of action aimed at reducing Wisconsin's greenhouse gas emissions.

On June 26, 2008, the Task Force voted to support a proposal that will be used as a basis for their final report, which will be released on July 28. This proposal, referred to as the "[Revised Strawman Proposal](#)" recommends a *voluntary* emissions reduction program for agricultural and forestry sectors.

The proposal states, "Wisconsin has substantial opportunities to achieve GHG emission benefits from the forestry and agriculture sectors through a variety of strategies which can reduce emissions and enhance sinks, in addition to providing the state with renewable fuels." "...[T]he recommendations of the Ag/Forestry Work Group to achieve emissions reductions in their sectors, and to increase terrestrial sink capacity, consist of voluntary programs, with incentives that will require significant funding. ... Yet it is important that these sectors do their share. Therefore, the progress in these sectors in reducing emissions, and in increasing terrestrial sink capacity, on a voluntary basis, should be evaluated by the state in 2012. If meaningful progress is not being made, or if the opposite is occurring — emissions are increasing and/or sink capacity continues to decrease — the state should consider imposing mandatory measures within these sectors..."

Accordingly, it appears likely that the final recommendations from the Task Force with regard to agricultural Green House Gas (GHG) emission reductions will be limited to voluntary programs, but that the effects from the agricultural and forestry sectors will be recommended to be re-evaluated in 2012.

DNR Releases Water Use Efficiency and Conservation Objectives for Public Comment

By Jordan Lamb

On July 15, 2008, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released its draft “Objectives for Water Use Efficiency and Conservation in the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Basin” for public comment. Under the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact, each state and province is required to develop its own water conservation and efficiency objectives, specifically tailored for their region. These objectives will not establish any new programs or requirements, but will, according to the DNR, “. . .ultimately help shape the development of a Basin-wide water conservation and efficiency program [that will be] adopted through separate rule-making.” For more information or to review the draft objectives go to the DNR’s web site at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/WIGLObjectives.htm> .

*Wisconsin Political Trivia:

Question: When does a new Wisconsin law take effect?

Answer: A law is “enacted” on the day that the governor either signs a bill which has passed both houses of the legislature, or when the governor allows a bill to become law without his or her signature. Next, the law is officially “published” within 10 working days after the date of enactment. The law officially takes effect *on the day after the publication date*, unless, of course, a different effective date is provided in the text of the law!

Capitol Link Details

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