

*Important note: if there's a bill you think is important to cattlemen and it's not included on the tracking list below, please contact Jodie at the SDCA office immediately - 605.945.2333 or [executive@sd cattlemen.org](mailto:executive@sd cattlemen.org).*

Only five legislative days left in the main run of the 2010 Session, yet there is much work to be done, including the budget. Next week will see final passage of remaining bills and the passage of the budget bill. Appropriators are awaiting next week's newly released income figures, which will help them determine how much money there is to spend or how much will have to be cut.

The Department of Agriculture, with the support of its prime sponsors, hog-housed **SB 75** to support agritourism in the state by decreasing liability for those engaged in such activities. The "new" bill passed the Senate floor on a vote of 28-5. As drafted the bill will:

- Decrease the liability of people engaged in providing agritourism activities.
- Potentially decrease insurance rates for producers wishing to engage in agritourism activities.
- Allow for greater promotion of South Dakota's number one industry by creating the tie to tourism, another of South Dakota's top industries.

Supported by SDCA, SB 75 passed out of House Ag Committee on a unanimous vote and will be heard on the House floor next week.

On Tuesday in Senate Taxation, **HB 1202** was removed from the table and hog-housed to address concerns that the new productivity methodology for valuing ag lands is not being properly implemented by some county directors of equalization. The bill would require the directors of equalization to follow the law for valuation of agriculture land and, if they do not, allows the Department of Revenue to step in and take over the valuation of ag land in that county.

As a member of the coalition of ag groups that's worked for several years to pass and implement the productivity valuation methodology, SDCA supported the hoghouse amendment to ensure proper implementation of the new system. In addition, SDCA co-signed a letter that was sent to Department of Revenue Secretary, Paul Kinsman, asking his department to investigate the implementation process in areas where it appears the new system isn't being implemented correctly. We are also co-signers on a letter to the editor outlining our concerns and our continued commitment to the productivity methodology. That letter was distributed to targeted media outlets in areas of concern. It's also important to note, however, that SDCA and other groups remain committed to working with the Department of Revenue to address the original intent of HB 1202 dealing with grassland assessments.



Also of interest to cattlemen, this week Governor Rounds announced his nomination of former Game Fish & Parks Secretary, John Cooper, to serve on the GF&P Commission. Mr. Cooper will replace Spencer Hawley on the Commission and his term will be effective February 16, 2010 through January 10, 2014. Mr. Cooper's nomination was subject to the Senate's approval and a confirmation hearing was held by the Senate Ag Committee on Tuesday morning. On a vote of 7-2, the Senate Ag Committee passed a recommendation to the full Senate NOT to approve Mr. Cooper's nomination. However, the Ag Committee did unanimously recommend approval of Susan Knippling's appointment to a second term on the GF&P Commission.

Despite lobbying by several ag groups and many phone calls from landowners expressing concerns with Mr. Cooper's nomination, it quickly became apparent the nomination would be approved by the full Senate. Indeed, by a vote of 22-12 (1 excused) on Thursday, the Senate approved Mr. Cooper's nomination to the GF&P Commission. SDCA was disappointed but not surprised by the approval and we will continue to seek ways to engage with the Commission in a constructive manner on behalf of our members.

---

*SDCA members are encouraged to contact Jodie at the SDCA office at 605.945.2333 or e-mail [executive@sdcattlemen.org](mailto:executive@sdcattlemen.org) if you have any questions regarding SDCA's legislative issues.*

**Useful Contact Information:**

- SDCA Office: 605-945-2333
- House Lobby: 605-773-3851 (to leave a message for your Representative)
- Senate Lobby: 605-773-3821 (to leave a message for your Senator)
- *Additional information regarding the bills, legislative committees, etc. can be found on LRC's website at <http://legis.state.sd.us/index.aspx>.*