SDFB Legislative Update – Week 3

With 12 legislative days completed and 25 days remaining, the 2021 session is almost one-third completed. There are 190 House bills and 164 Senate bills for a total of 384, a normal number compared to recent years. The last day for bills to be turned in to LRC is Monday, Feb. 1, and they must be introduced on the house of origin floor by Wednesday.

SB 87 SD FARM BUREAU HEALTHCARE
South Dakota Farm Bureau’s number one priority for this session is Senate Bill 87, the SD Farm Bureau healthcare bill. It was passed by the Senate Commerce and Energy Committee with a 7 to 1 vote on Thursday, Jan. 28. It will be debated and voted on by the Senate the first part of next week. The seven Senators voting yes were: Casey Crabtree, Lee Shoenbeck, Al Novstrup, Jim Stalzer, Wayne Steinhauer, Erin Tobin, and David Wheeler. If one of these is your Senator, please contact and tell them thank you.

SB 87 will provide an additional choice for Farm Bureau members when selecting health care coverage. South Dakota Farm Bureau has a 3rd party administrator – the Farm Bureau Health Plans of Tennessee – that will provide all the necessary services to ensure the SD Farm Bureau Health Care Plan will be operated in a successful manner, designed for long range service to Farm Bureau members. It will be self-funded, fully reinsured and not regulated by the state. This will allow SDFB to provide a high quality and affordable benefit to Farm Bureau members. Our effort is patterned after not only Tennessee but also Kansas and Indiana plans which are operated by Farm Bureau in those states.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SENATOR THIS WEEKEND AND ASK FOR THEIR “YES” VOTE ON SB 87.

You can find resources to contact your legislator at www.sdfbf.org

ALSO – Below is a list of Cracker Barrels in various districts tomorrow. We encourage you to attend if you are able!

Following is a summary of actions on bills SDFB is also supporting and can be found on the tracking list at www.sdfbf.org.

HB 1028 is a bill to clarify state law concerning what parties are eligible to contest a water permit. In the past decade it has become more common for the same groups and individuals to contest the issuance of a state water permit in front of the State Water Board. SDFB testified in favor of HB 1028 and it passed the House 49 to 21.

HB 1040 is a bill to authorize $5M in monies received by the state for Covid relief, be used for grant monies to assist small meat plants in the state to purchase equipment for
expanding the capacity of their processing facility. SD Farm Bureau and a long list of other supporters testified in favor and the bill passed House Ag 13 to 0 and was sent to the House Appropriations Committee.

**HB 1042** is a bill to change the program to provide a property tax reduction for planting vegetation buffers along designated streams, rivers and lakes. The changes, if passed, would increase the incentive and lengthen the contract from the present 1-year term to a 10-year term. It will be heard in House Ag Committee on Tuesday, Feb. 2. The buffer program is intended to improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat. There will be an amendment in committee to allow haying of land, irrigated with a center pivot, to be mowed until June 25. The mowing date for all other buffers is July 10. SDFB will support the bill and the amendment.

**HB 1046** is a bill to provide liability protection for schools, local governments, businesses etc., from nuisance or frivolous lawsuits related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty groups, including SDFB, are supporting the bill, with work on the language beginning right after session last year. HB 1046 used the Iowa law as a model. HB 1046 passed the House 60 to 10 and has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**SB 34** is a bill to provide $100M for the expansion of broadband in the state to the remaining 135,000 residents who are not connected. The source of the dollars is federal COVID-19 relief monies that are being directed to one-time projects rather than ongoing/annual expenditures. The money will be matched by federal grants and private sector contributions to more than double the amount. The bill passed the Senate Commerce Committee 8 to 0 and was sent to the Joint Committee on Appropriations. SDFB testified in favor of SB 34.

**SB 52** is a bill to extend the term of a general permit for a livestock operation from the present 5 years to 10 years. This will reduce paperwork, time and effort by the livestock farmer and by DENR. The bill passed the Senate 27 to 7 and was sent to the House and assigned to House Ag.

**SB 70** is a bill to update and reorganize the statute on assessment for property taxation. The bill passed the Senate 34 to 0. Over the last three decades, this law has been amended and changed at least 30 times. When that happens, a statute becomes a jumble, making it very difficult to read and understand. Senator Duvall, Representative Chaffee and the Property Tax Division in the Department of Revenue, spent many hours of work in reorganizing the existing language. This fall and early in the session they reviewed their work a number of times with several ag groups including SD Farm Bureau.

**SB 99** is a bill to appropriate $12M for replacement of the beef complex, which burned down last fall, on the State Fairgrounds. Also, approximately $4M will be realized from insurance and $4M from donations to build a $20M building that will not only be used during State Fair, but also for rodeos and many other shows and events throughout the
year. SB 99 will have its first hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 2 in front of Senate Ag Committee.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me.

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Helpful Links:

View the SDFB bill-tracker list here:
https://www.sdfbf.org/Policy-Advocacy/State-Legislative

View the details on any bill by clicking this link and typing in the bill number:
https://sdlegislature.gov/Session/Bills/44

Find contact information for the Legislators here:
https://sdlegislature.gov/Legislators/Contacts/44

Cracker Barrels for Jan. 30:

**Cracker Barrel - District 33, 34, 35**
January 30 at 8:00 a.m. MT
Event Center on the campus of Western Dakota Tech (Masks required for in person attendees)
Listen live from anywhere here.

**Cracker Barrel - District 7**
January 30 at 9:00 a.m. CT
On Zoom with the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce. Register here.

**Cracker Barrel - District 18**
January 30 at 10:00 a.m. CT
Live streamed on the Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce Facebook page

**Cracker Barrel - District 1, 2 and 3**
January 30 at 10 am CT
Johnson Fine Arts Center - NSU Campus- Aberdeen
(Masks are required)