



Political Papers

APRIL 2014

CONGRESSIONAL CALENDAR

April 14-25: In District

April 28-May 9: Session

May 12-16: In District

May 19-30: Session

June 2-6: In District

June 9-26: Session

June 30-July 4: In District

July 8-31: Session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY CALENDAR

April 14-25: In District

April 29-May 31: Session

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CONSUMER FUEL CHOICE FOR IL

Illinois Corn continues to work on increasing E15 availability in Illinois, mostly through the Consumer Fuel Choice for Illinois bill in the Illinois General Assembly.

This bill would remove the tax incentive from E10 (which has already saturated the marketplace), and transfer a portion of the incentive to E15.

Because the tax incentive for E15 would be lower than the E10 incentive, the bill nets a significant return to the Illinois

budget, making this one of the only bills that seek to solve a portion of Illinois' financial woes.

Additionally, a portion of the remaining funds would be directed for high blends of ethanol infrastructure in the state.

Illinois Corn has heard from members that finding higher blends of ethanol can be difficult throughout the state. Some of these funds will be used to increase the number of flexfuel pumps within the state.



Ethanol is cheaper than regular gasoline and **projects to be \$1 cheaper** in coming years.

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LOCK AND DAM UPGRADES

A Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) has passed both the House and Senate and now the bills sit in conference committee awaiting compromise. The best information available indicates that the conference report will contain some needed reform that will move lock and dam upgrades closer to reality.

Both bills included provisions to provide relief to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund to adjust the cost share for Olmsted Lock and Dam. This change pushes the burden of significant cost overruns and time delays to the government that caused the problem and frees up trust fund money to

begin construction on other priority locks and dams. We have Congressional support for this action in both chambers.

Conferees are likely to finish the conference report and send it to the floor of each body once the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sends Congress a report on a western water project on April 30.

The other needed reform, an increase to the fuel tax that provides income to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, has potential to be passed this year as well.

The 6-9 cent increase has not been included in previous reau-

thorizations of WRDA, but this portion of reform is currently being discussed in some type of tax extenders bill. It is uncertain if the bill will receive serious consideration in this Congress.

This increase would provide additional income to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, shortening the timeline for new locks and dams. An increase of up to 20 cents would still yield a positive return for Illinois farmers in the increased efficiencies they could gain.

Watch for more information on this important bill this summer.



POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES 101

Political Action Committees (PACs) are highly regulated and have a variety of rules that they must abide by. For ICGA's PAC, the federal guidelines are the ones we most concern ourselves with. State guidelines vary by state and Illinois has a more open structure regarding how state PAC monies are solicited, collected, and distributed.

Federal PACs are restricted on the sort of monies that they accept. Only personal checks, personal money orders, or

personal credit cards may be used to make a Federal PAC donation.

Additionally, donations to the Federal PAC are not tax deductible.

During our yearly PAC solicitations, ICGA tries to clearly state that personal checks must be used if you plan to donate to the PAC. However, occasionally some company/farm checks are sent in as an oversight by the donor.

Because our Illinois guidelines are more relaxed, we are able

to accept company checks or credit cards and we place those PAC donations into our State PAC account.

If you do decide to donate to the ICGA PAC, please always consider using a personal check. With the Federal guidelines being more strict, Federal PAC dollars are hard to come by and we always appreciate those personal checks or credit card contributions.

YES FOR INDEPENDENT MAPS

77% of Illinois voters believe corruption in Illinois government is widespread, according to the 2012 Simon Poll.

They're right: A recent University of Illinois study ranked Illinois the third most corrupt state. Voter cynicism is widespread. According to the National Conference on Citizenship, only 15% of Illinoisans believe state government does the right thing most of time. Yet we can't hold politicians accountable because they have taken over the redistricting process.

Political leaders own redistricting—the process of drawing legislative maps. Behind closed doors, they design the district boundaries to control who will be elected, leaving voters without a voice. These same politicians choose their voters, instead of the people deciding who will represent them. Legislators have little reason to listen to the needs of Illinois

residents, because there's no way for voters to hold them accountable.

Last year, Illinois House incumbents won 97% of their general election races; two-thirds of them did not even face a challenger.

This coalition aims to fix the broken process by putting an amendment on the November 2014 ballot. The proposed constitutional amendment would take redistricting out of the hands of politicians and give the power back to the people. This amendment brings independence to a broken,

unfair, and secret process that gives politicians too much control. Voters should be in charge and this proposed system is **transparent, nonpartisan** and **independent** from the legislature.

Right now, the coalition is working to collect the signatures necessary to place the initiative on the November 2014 ballot. Petitioning will continue through April 2014, and then Illinoisans will be able to vote for real change in state government on Nov. 4, 2014.

If you see one of the petition gatherers in your neighborhood, you can sign their petition as long as you are a registered Illinois voter. You can also request petitions from the campaign. This will enable you to collect signatures from your friends, family and neighbors. Over 298,000 valid signatures are needed to qualify for the ballot.



If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically to save printing costs, please email your request to lmitchell@ilcorn.org.

CONSUMER FUEL CHOICE (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

The Consumer Fuel Choice for IL (H.B. 165/S.B. 52) is currently sponsored by Rep. John Bradley in the House and Sen. John Sullivan in the Senate. There are significant challenges to the legislation being pressed by the Illinois Petroleum Marketers and ABATE, the motorcycle lobbying group. We expect action sometime in May.

If you would like to help increase the visibility of this issue in Spring-

field, please call your members of the General Assembly and ask them to support the Consumer Fuel Choice for IL.

Demand is currently not keeping pace with increased corn production because:

- We have hit the 10 percent blend wall and the oil industry is prohibiting your access to increased market share.
- There are not enough flex fuel

stations (pumps that dispense higher blends of ethanol) to significantly increase ethanol sales due to a lack of infrastructure.

- Independent gasoline retailers are having a difficult time offering E15 because of state and federal disincentives.

Call your elected officials and pass along these messages today!

GMO LABELING BILL BY SENATOR KOEHLER

Senator David Koehler, Chairman of the Illinois Senate Ag Committee, continues to push mandatory GMO labeling in Illinois, stating that, "The public is really demanding more transparency. Not only in government, but in the products they buy. This is really about being more aware, of having more information about what it is that you're consuming."

The bill as introduced would require all foods containing any ingredients made from biotechnology to be labeled as "Genetically Engineered". The label would be mandatory and establishes a negative perception of biotechnology, and is contradictory to FDA food labeling



guidelines.

Not only that, but the bill allows many segments of industry to be exempt. As an example, alcoholic beverages would not be required to be labeled even though genetically modified yeasts are used in wine production.

Food sold in restaurants and GM products used in medicines and

pharmaceuticals would also be exempt.

Illinois agriculture continues to fight this bill. We do not stand in opposition to the idea that consumers have a right to know what is in their food, but because of exemptions for certain facets of industry. Agriculture is also opposed to a state law, understanding that food is bought and sold over state lines and a federal standard is more appropriate, should a GMO labeling standard be approved.

Interestingly enough, the U.S. Food and Drug Association is opposed to including GMO information on current nutritional labels. Their position remains static since 1992 when they determined that GM foods are substantially similar to other foods and thus, there is no scientific basis for labeling.

Although Senator Koehler filed an amendment, the sponsor has indicated that he is not going to call the bill during this spring legislative session.



**Illinois Corn Growers
Association**

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The Illinois Corn Growers Association met with every member of the Illinois Delegation in Washington, DC in March 2014.

Our top priorities were getting votes to pass the Water Resources Development Act conference report, encouraging legislators to consider increasing the user fee to fund locks and dams, and preserving the Renewable Fuel Standard.



Pictured are meetings with Senator Dick Durbin (top) and Congressman Bill Enyart (bottom).

Both are supportive of many of the priorities of Illinois corn farmers.

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Donating to the ICGA PAC is easy!

Simply complete your personal check and fill out the form below.

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Amount: _____

PAC contributions are not tax deductible and cannot be treated as a business expense. For ICGA's PAC Policies and Guidelines, contact the ICGA office at 309-557-3257.