



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

# FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL UPDATE

## COVID-19 STATE UPDATE

Good Afternoon, we wanted to provide a brief update on agricultural issues surrounding COVID-19 and let you know some actions that Farm Bureau is taking to assist our farmers and ranchers continue the hard work of putting food on people's tables during these troubling times.

### **COVID-19, BY THE NUMBERS**

As of March 17, 2020, 6 p.m., there have been a total of 598 positive cases and 13 deaths in California. This total does not include passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship currently docked in Oakland.

Ages of all confirmed positive cases:

- Age 0-17: 13 cases
- Age 18-64: 392 cases
- Age 65+: 188 cases
- Unknown: 5 cases

24 – Cases of positive tests related to federal repatriation flights

574 – Cases not related to repatriation flights

- 91 Travel related
- 88 Person-to-person acquired
- 142 Community acquired
- 253 Under investigation

Approximately 11,900 people are self-monitoring, across 49 local health jurisdictions, after returning to the U.S. from travel. 21 public health labs in California are testing samples for COVID-19. More public health labs will soon be able to test samples for COVID-19.

### **STATE LEGISLATURE RECESSES**

In unprecedented action, the State Assembly and Senate have agreed to recess until April 13<sup>th</sup>. This action was taken late on Monday evening after the Legislature passed a series of emergency budget bills, described below, to address the potential economic impacts of COVID-19. The Legislature is allowing some employees to work remotely, and we anticipate members will be more active in their local responses to outbreak and attempts at containment.

### **EMERGENCY BUDGET ACTION**

The Governor called upon the Legislature to suspend Senate and Assembly Rules to allow for the vote and eventual passage of a series of emergency budget bills to address the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19. [SB 89](#) appropriates \$500 million for the purpose to enact the Governor's Emergency Proclamation. The Department of Finance may increase this amount to \$1 billion, if necessary, with notification of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. The bill also appropriates \$84.1 million to CalRecycle for debris removal costs related to the 2018 Camp Fire. The bill includes

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legislative intent language that specifies the Administration will work with stakeholders to develop strategies to help small business, non-profits and individuals facing hardships due to COVID-19. Likewise, [SB 117](#) makes various changes to local educational agencies (LEAs) to allow for flexible funding during the COVID-19 emergency. This bill specifies that LEAs may exclude the current dates when determining school attendance (which is one of the bases for reimbursement from the State). It also waives portions of the education code for instructional days during school and childcare closures, specifies charter schools with independent study don't need to submit certain materials during closures, and extends the testing window for English proficiency and student performance testing. Finally, the bill provides \$100 million in one-time Proposition 98 General Fund dollars to LEAs for classroom cleaning and personal protective equipment purchasing.

### **EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom has issued a series of executive orders in the interest of protecting the public's health. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, Governor Newsom declared an official state of emergency, freeing up existing resources and allowing greater requests for federal resources to combat this outbreak. Among these orders, the following are of note to the agricultural community:

- Mobilizes the National Guard to perform humanitarian missions across the state including food distribution, ensuring resiliency of supply lines, as well as supporting public safety as required.
- Requests the California Public Utilities Commission monitor measures undertaken by public and private utility providers to implement customer protections for critical utilities, including electric, gas, water, internet, landline telephone, and cell phone service.
- Identifies health care facilities and resources across the State to manage infected patients and authorize healthcare workers and first responders who are asymptomatic and follow protocols to continue to work during the emergency. The Governor expressed called for the to increase resources provided to rural, underserved areas of the State.
- Delays the deadline for state tax filing by 60 days for individuals and businesses unable to file based on compliance with public health requirements.
- Directs residents to follow public health directives and guidance, including to cancel non-essential gatherings that do not meet state criteria;
- Readies the State to commandeer property for temporary residences and medical facilities for quarantining, isolating or treating individuals;
- Allows local or state legislative bodies to hold meetings via teleconference and to make meetings accessible electronically;
- Waives portions of the Labor Code related to mass layoffs for business effective so long as employers provide as much notice as practically possible and adhere to other provisions detailed. The executive order also directs the Labor and Workforce Development Agency to provide guidance to impacted employees.
- Call for the closure of bars, wineries, breweries and pubs, except for venues that are currently authorized to provide off sale beer and wine. Bars, breweries, pubs, and wineries that include meals provided by a full kitchen should follow the restaurant guidance below if they provide delivery or pick-up options.
- Direct the closure of all restaurants for in-restaurant seated dining and should be open only to drive-through or other pick-up/delivery options.
- Deem grocery markets, food distribution centers and farmers' markets, operating under specific cleanliness standards and with enforcement of social distancing for customers, are essential to the public health and specify they should remain open and operational.

- Declare that interstate motor carriers who have an active US Department of Transportation number and interstate operating authority may do so in California without having to hold an active Motor Carrier Property permit. Additionally, drivers are able to exceed hours-of-service if operating in the interest of food distribution.

### **GUIDANCE FOR FOOD AND SERVICE INDUSTRY**

The Department of Public Health has recently posted information developed by State health and emergency officials regarding guidance to food and beverage venues to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. The guidance is intended to outline steps for restaurants, bars, wineries, food trucks, grocery stores, and farmers' markets to take to protect against the spread of COVID-19. The guidance, which is available [here](#), makes the following suggestions to grocery stores, food distribution sites, and certified farmers' markets:

- Ensure that social distancing of six feet per person is maintained.
- Limiting the number of customers at any given time as necessary
- Increase cleaning and sanitizing frequency of restroom and other high contact areas
- Eliminate events/marketing that targeting high risk populations
- Emphasize online ordering with outside pick-up or delivery options
- Space booths accordingly to increase social distancing
- Encourage activities such as pre-bagging to expedite purchasing
- Suspend sampling activities
- Eliminate non-essential/non-related services, such as bands or other entertainment.

### **CA FARM BUREAU ACTIONS**

California Farm Bureau has taken a series of actions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, several of which have prompted the aforementioned changes and directives from the Newsom Administration and State agencies. We are continuing to monitor the situation and staying in close contact with Agency officials, including local enforcement, to ensure for the ongoing availability of produce, livestock, dairy, animal feed and processed foods throughout the state and the nation. Below is a synopsis of high-level actions to date:

- Farm Bureau facilitated a call with Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture, Karen Ross, and County Farm Bureaus to discuss actions of the state related to COVID-19. On the call, Secretary Ross discussed that she is part of a unified command team that meets daily to discuss recent updates. She is carrying Farm Bureaus message about concerns of food safety, labor shortages, employee training requirements, and availability of agricultural products at farmers' markets, retail outlets and nursery/garden centers. The Secretary also committed to developing additional for on-farm safety, employee health and food handling procedures for at-home cooking.
- Farm Bureau has been successful in petitioning the Newsom Administration to exempt transporters of agricultural products from licensing and hours-of-service requirements for the time being.
- Farm Bureau has interceded on behalf of farmers' markets to ensure that they may remain open as an essential service to the community with the aforementioned guidance issued by the Department of Public Health.
- Farm Employers Labor Service has gathered useful COVID-19 resources for employers, including guidance from the CDC, the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and

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[Legal Services Plan](#) partner firm Barsamian & Moody. It can be accessed [here](#) on the FELS website.

- Farm Bureau is working with key Legislators on critical budgetary and regulatory relief that the Legislature will consider upon their return.
- Farm Bureau is working to reverse or mitigate the directive that shuts down wineries and allow for them to continue business but under revised protocols.