

## IFA Legislative Report

August 12, 2009

During this session, SB 1413 & HB 1087, both bills that reconstitute the Forestry Development Council, passed. On August 10, 2009 the Governor signed SB 1413 making it Public Act 96-0217. Please thank our sponsors, Sen. Sullivan (D) Rushville, Rep. Reitz (D) Steeleville, and Rep. Myers (R) Colchester for their hard work in getting this bill passed two years in a row. We need to also thank the Governor for signing the legislation.

Our next assignment is to get a list of the folks we would like to serve on the Forestry Development Council and get them appointed so that the Council can get back to work. Please give your names to Dave Gilliespie so that the legislative committee can form a complete list to be given to the Director of Dept. of Natural Resources and the Governor.

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, Dave Gilliespie, Jenni and I met with Director Marc Miller. We had a good discussion about our concerns about the Forestry Development Council and increasing the number of foresters at DNR. The Director was agreeable to our concerns but also needs resources to get additional staff hired. We stated that IFA was interested in working with the Director to move forestry issues forward.

On July 15 a budget built on lots of borrowing was passed by the House and Senate. The Governor has signed the budget bills and has made over another billion dollars in cuts. The Governor is also asking agencies to hold back another billion dollars in case the budget has not got enough dollars to make it through the year.

This budget is not going to allow the foresters to be built back up in DNR. There may be a tax increase considered in January but I am not optimistic that one will pass before the general election in November. I don't know how the state manages to stay afloat until 2011. We have thought that the worst years were behind us in February of 2009 but I am not sure of that now.

The year ahead could be very difficult for every aspect of the state of Illinois including DNR.

Paula and Jenni Purdue

