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Illinois Forestry Association Legislative Report

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Paula & Jenni Purdue

The session is not over yet. We have a state budget which may or may not be the final state budget.

This session has been the craziest session of my 31 year career. The top three Democrats have been fighting each other rather than fighting on or about issues. This session may never end. As suggested, we may have a state budget. There are not dollars for additional staffing at forests in the current budget. We will need to start now to get those dollars in the budget for next year.

In June a press conference was held to discuss the compromise in SB 17 which improves conservation and provides an orderly transition for how wooded land that is currently taxed as farmland will be taxed in the future. In late June and early July, SB 17 was passed out of both houses. It is sitting on the Governor's desk awaiting his action. If you would like to read the bill or see the legislative action, go to www.ilga.gov. On the side of the page – find the slot on the left side and write in SB 17. The bill and amendments and legislative action will all be available.

I know that your leaders are working to generate more members throughout the state of Illinois . As your membership grows, so does your political clout. I am hopeful that we can organize some tours of forested areas with legislators that are in important political positions. The more the legislators understand and believe in your mission, the more successful we can be in gaining legislative wins.

Jenni and I look forward to working with you and helping to grow your organization and political clout.