



IFA Legislative Report March 17, 2008

This legislative session has been very hectic. As in the first session of every session, many bills have been introduced. The Senate has introduced over 2900 bills while the house is up past 6000 bills. Many of these bills were introduced last session as we are in the second year of a general assembly cycle but the legislators did a good job of introducing thousands of more bills this year.

As of Friday, March 14, we made it through our first deadline. Actually the deadline became March 13th because the House adjourned a day early than scheduled. We have gone through the IFA bills and eliminated all bills that are not currently alive. We are dealing with fewer bills for the next cycle.

IFA supports HB 4549 and it is on second reading in the House. An amendment was added that eliminates the need for adding rules. This amendment is being added to many House bills and is a part of the continuing argument between the Speaker of the House and the Governor. There is concern about whether the 10 acreage limit amendment will be added. Our information at this time is that the sponsor is worried about adding an amendment that may be controversial.

IFA is opposed to SB 2120 and shared our fact sheets and slipped the bill in committee. Our opposition, along with the Municipal League and others, has caused the sponsor to hold a meeting during the break to work on an amendment. Unfortunately, no one from IFA is able to make the 3/20th meeting, but we will check to see what agreement if any comes from that meeting.

IFA supported HB 5775, it did not get out of committee, and there was opposition from the Landscapers, Arbors, and the department of Ag. The Department of Ag was opposed because it felt the responsibility of tree licensing was best dealt with through DNR. The opposition said it would work with the Sponsor, but nothing came out of committee, so now the bill is dead. If this is a bill that IFA wants to support in the future – since it was proposed by one of our members – we need to figure out how to work together to get the bill passed next session.

We were able to join Susan and Dave at the Agricultural Breakfast. We met and chatted with many legislators to share our concerns about lack of staffing for forestry in DNR. There were no legislators opposed to more staffing but the concern is where do we find the dollars to support the staffing that we need. On how to find dollars there is not an agreement.

The IFA will have a lobby day scheduled on April 9th to support HB 4549, more forestry staffing positions and work SB 2120 depending on what the 3/20 meeting provides. We hope to have a good number of IFA members to share their concerns with the legislature.

Provided by Paula and Jenni Purdue