



American Agri-Women & Federated Women in Timber



2011 Key Issues

Ag Labor/Immigration

Immigration enforcement without workable programs to address the labor needs of the farm sector will harm the economy and jeopardize American jobs. We must have a workable program to ensure a legal and stable farm labor supply. A workable farm labor program to retain current experienced farm workers and ensure future workers must be part of any legislation addressing immigration enforcement.

Biomass and renewable energy

We urge Congress and federal land managers to aggressively pursue actions to produce renewable energy from agricultural biomass, including forest biomass harvested from actively managed public and private forestland. Renewable energy from biomass will increase the nation's energy independence as well as improve the health of our nation's forests and rural communities, creating jobs and securing the infrastructure of our timber supplying states.

Black Hills Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak

A cohesive strategy and more aggressive treatments are needed to address the mountain pine beetle outbreak which has infested over 400,000 acres since 1998, with no signs of abating. This epidemic threatens destruction of valuable natural resources in the Black Hills.

Broadband for America

High speed Internet delivery to rural America is critical to our farms and ranches and rural communities. High speed access adds critical jobs and investment in our economy while providing better health care and education opportunities. However, many Americans still are not online, and therefore do not have access to these benefits that broadband Internet affords. We strongly urge Congress and the FCC to enact a National Broadband strategy which spurs continued private investment into broadband networks and is focused on getting all of America online. Over the past decade, the Internet has grown and its use has expanded because of private investment. We must continue policies which have made the Internet the dynamic, competitive growth engine that it is, so that all Americans can enjoy the benefits it offers.

Carbon Sequestration & Cap & Trade

We oppose any legislation, such as Cap and Trade and clean energy bills, that would put U.S. agriculture at a competitive disadvantage with other countries. Any climate change policy must deliver environmental progress without harming the economy or U.S. food and fiber production.

GHG reductions should fully recognize the benefits provided by working forests, harvested wood products and renewable energy.

Estate Tax Reform

We support **H.R. 1259**, the “Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2011.” America’s family businesses and farmers were hit by a large estate tax increase, from 0% to 35%, at the beginning of 2011, making planning and passing on farms and businesses to the next generation even more difficult. As it stands, more than 70% of family businesses do not survive to the second generation, and a full 90% of family businesses do not survive to the third. We urge Congress to extend relief to family businesses and farms by cosponsoring the bi-partisan Rep. Brady/Ross bill, H.R. 1259, “Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2011” to permanently eliminate the burdensome estate tax.

Endangered Species Act Consultations for Pesticides

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively, the Services) have dramatically different views on approaches to assessing and managing potential risks to fish, wildlife and plant species. Consequently, these agencies disagree on fundamental legal and science policy matters related to their respective obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). These scientific disagreements, along with inability to develop a sound and workable process for consultation under ESA, threaten public health, agricultural productivity, global competitiveness, and will place a further burden on our economy and reduce employment with no commensurate benefit to threatened and endangered species.

FIFRA Regulation of Pesticides

HR 872, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act, would amend FIFRA and CWA to conclusively declare that, under both laws, no permit is required for the labeled use of any registered pesticide. It would instruct EPA and the courts that Congress did not intend other environmental laws to overtake FIFRA by creating duplicative regulatory burdens. On March 31, 2011, HR 872 passed the House. In the Senate, HR 872 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture.

We are seeking bipartisan Congressional cosponsorship and/or support of HR 872. We urge Congress to pass the bill into law before the permit becomes final this year.

Forest Management & Climate Change

We urge Congress and federal land managers to support increased active forest management as a way to benefit the environment and mitigate climate change. Active management contributes to the health of the forest, and healthy forests, in turn, contribute to a healthier environment overall.

Government Litigation Savings Act - Reform of Excessive Litigation Pay-Outs

We support the passage of **H.R. 1996 and S. 1061**, to revise the Equal Access to Justice Act and add more accountability and consequences. The proposed legislation will put a stop to a non-profit environmental organization’s ability to use the existing act as a “cash cow” to pad their pockets. We support a cap on attorney fees; blocking of groups whose net worth exceeds \$7 million from filing for payments under the act; increasing transparency to the program.

Health Care Reform

Parts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) need to be reconsidered and reevaluated. Two provisions of PPACA that cause more injury than enhancement to employer provided health care benefits are the elimination of the annual limits and the “Cadillac” plan excise tax. Both should be repealed.

Horse Slaughter

We urge House and Senate delegations to please NOT SUPPORT any effort that will impact the welfare of horses or the horse industry without first studying a soon to be released GAO Report!. The GAO Study on the Horse Industry was requested by the Senate Ag Appropriations Committee more than a year and a half ago. GAO has thoroughly studied the effect of the plants closing on the welfare of horses themselves, as well as the effect on farm economy.

Reforming gross vehicle weight limits

We join the Agricultural Transportation Efficiency Coalition (AgTEC) in urging Congress to support legislation that would allow trucks using the National Highway System, including the federal interstate highways, to haul 97,000 pounds with the addition of a sixth axle. A pilot study of the Transportation Research Board recommended this change. Increasing Gross Vehicle Weights for trucks will have the effect of consolidating loads, which means that fewer trucks will be needed to haul the same amount of product, leading to less fuel consumption, less pollution, and greter safety on our highways.

Regulatory Activism - Reins Act

AAW supports the legislative process and due process for determining major agricultural policy. We oppose any fedearl agency mandating regulatory authority without going through the legislative process and due process. We support H.R. 10, the ReinsAct, a bill that would require Congressional approval of any regulatory rule that imposes compliance costs in excess of \$100 million annually. The Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act (H.R. 10) would require agencies to seek Congressional approval of such regulation. If Congress fails to approve the rule within 70 days of promulgation, the rule is void.

Retirement Security

The U.S. ifsacing a looming retirement crisis. Both women and America’s rural and farming communities face unique retirement challenges. We support public policy that makes retirement vchicles and retirememnt public policies a guarntee lifetime income.

Saving America While Rebuilding Japan

As America support rebuilding from natural disasters - here or abroad - we encourage providing resources from our country rather than cash contributions, where feasible. This helps rebuild and also is a benefit to U.S. rural communities and businesses.

Secure Rural Schools Self Determination Act

We do not support the reauthorization of PL106-393. If reauthorization is considered, it must address the federal government’s obligation to return 25% of all gross receipts generated on all foret lands to the county(s) in which those lands lie and/or 4% of gross receipts from Public

Domain Lands; long term health of public forests; and management of public forest resources to provide products and a sustainable source of revenue.

Soil Fumigants Community Outreach Program

Soil fumigants play a critical role in the production of numerous specialty crops throughout our country. EPA is considering what community outreach is necessary for reregistration of soil fumigants. We support a community outreach program that is reasonable and cost-effective but that doesn't needlessly alarm local residents or encourage frivolous lawsuits.

Support of drilling for oil in the U.S.

We support all forms of energy use and increased U.S. energy production, to increase U.S. oil independence and the production of renewable fuels.

Wildfires

We support **H.R. 1485**, the Catastrophic Wildfire Community Protection Act to address the public health and safety threat presented by the risk of wildfire on 60-80 million acres of Federal Lands.

WildLands designation by Department of Interior

AAW is opposed to expansion of wilderness areas in the U.S. So much of our western states is already in federal ownership.

For more information:

americanagriwomen.org

womenintimber.org