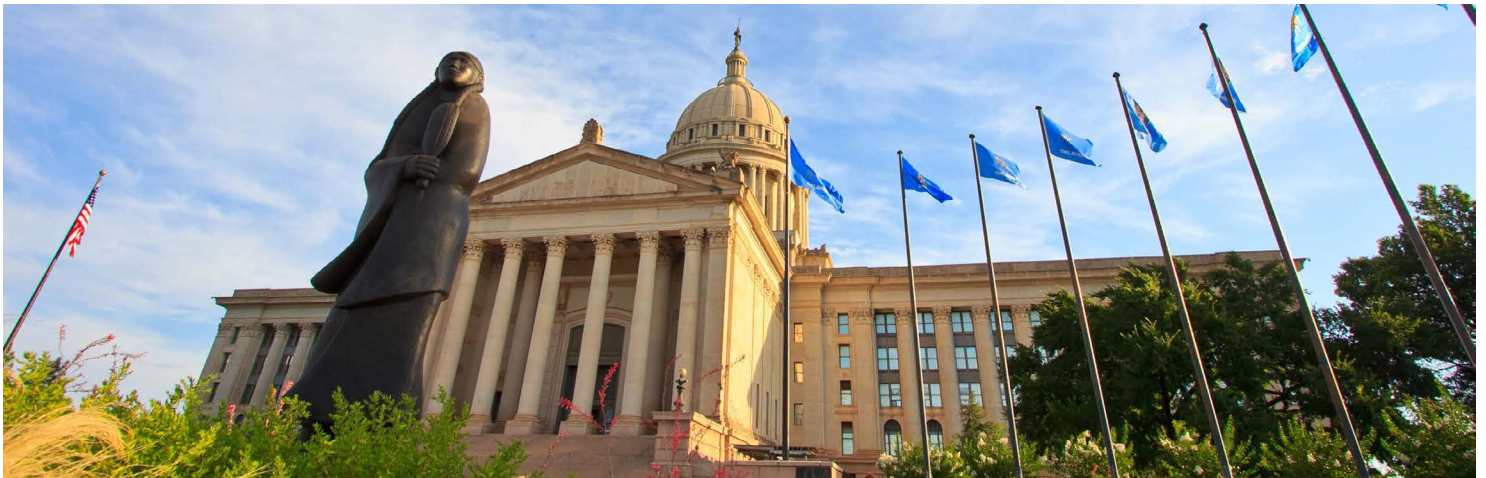


PERSPECTIVE

April 21, 2023



Legislative update: final committee deadline, drought commission, public safety protection districts

The legislature crossed another deadline threshold on Thursday, April 13, finishing up the second and final committee deadline of the legislative session. While Senate bills assigned to House appropriations and budget committee have until Thursday, April 20, all other bills were required to be passed out of their assigned committee from the opposite chamber from which they originated.

Initial numbers show that there are roughly 500 bills and joint resolutions remaining available for consideration ahead of the next deadline on April 27, which will require bills to be passed off of the floor of the opposite chamber. Following the April 27 deadline, both chambers will turn their focus to the budget for fiscal year 2024, which must be passed by both chambers by Friday, May 26.

HB 1329 by Rep. Judd Strom and Sen. Bill Coleman remains alive and is available for consideration by the full Senate chamber. If passed, HB 1329 would require any state agency owned, operated, or leased land for livestock grazing to be enclosed by a fence.

The state agency or respective lessee would be responsible for setting and maintaining the fence. Additionally, the state agency would be permitted to enter into a material and labor cost-sharing contract with adjacent landowners.

HB 1847 by Rep. John Kane and Sen. Grant Green passed out of the Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs committee this week. HB 1847 adds two additional members to the Emergency Drought Commission. Currently, the Commission is made up of the executive director of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, the Oklahoma secretary of agriculture, and the executive director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. Due to the Open Meetings Act, two members of the commission could not meet to discuss issues relating to the drought commission's work without violating the Act. HB 1847 would allow two members to discuss ideas for commission spending and programs ahead of official meetings in order to work out details in advance.

HB 2398 by Rep. Neil Hays and Sen. Paul Rosino received approval from the Senate retirement & insurance

committee on Tuesday. HB 2398 would allow a first responder to receive worker's compensation benefits for mental injury or illness resulting from an on-the-job experience.

A similar bill to HB 2398 that died earlier in the session would have then allowed for a municipality to pass on any cost incurred by the worker's compensation claims to the property taxes of everyone living within the service district of the first responder without a vote or notice to those required to pay regardless of whether or not they lived within the city limits.

HB 2398 would only allow the municipality to pass on the additional cost to their judgement rolls if a public safety protection district had been established by a 60% approval of voters within the municipality. The increase in property taxes would only apply to taxpayers with property within the city limits.

For an update on weekly happenings at the Capitol and an outlook on what is ahead, be sure to tune in to Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Weekly Public Policy Update each Friday at noon.

WOTUS rule implementation halted in Oklahoma, 23 other states

The U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota enjoined the 2023 Waters of the United States rule in 24 states, including Oklahoma, on Wednesday, April 12.

The ruling blocks implementation of the 2023 WOTUS rule in 24 states, adding to a previous injunction issued by a Texas court last month that blocked implementation in Texas and Idaho.

In the ruling, the court noted the 2023 rule is confusing and recognized the rule's boundaries are "unlimited." The court's opinion also recognized the burden of "costly compliance efforts" placed on individual landowners.

The Biden administration's 2023 WOTUS rule took effect on March 20, expanding the regulatory authority of the Clean Water Act. Farm Bureau members see the rule as an overreach of authority and a taking of private property rights, limiting farmers' and ranchers' ability to care for their land while producing food, fuel and fiber.

American Farm Bureau and 17 other industry groups are a party to both the North Dakota and Texas cases.

AFBF, Oklahoma Farm Bureau and fellow state Farm Bureaus continue to wait for a ruling this spring in the U.S. Supreme Court in the case *Sackett v. EPA*, which challenges EPA's overreach of its Clean Water Act jurisdiction.

County Farm Bureaus begin hosting local legislative dinners and receptions

Legislative dinners hosted by county Farm Bureaus across the state serve as a way for OKFB members to share the grassroots policies developed by Farm Bureau members with their legislators. Members hear updates and ask questions about legislation affecting agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

Rogers and Mayes County Farm Bureaus joined to host a legislative dinner for their members on Thursday, April 6. State legislators and field staff for Sen. Markwayne Mullin and Congressman Josh Brecheen provided remarks and answered questions.

Grady County Farm Bureau held a legislative dinner on Thursday, April 6, and heard from Sen. Lonnie Paxton and Reps. Brad Boles and Dick Lowe. Kiowa, Greer, Washita and Jackson County Farm Bureau hosted a multi-county legislative dinner in Sentinel on Thursday, April 13, where Sen. Brent Howard and Rep. Nick Archer provided updates and answered questions.

We are thankful for legislators who take time to hear from our Farm Bureau members across the state.



Noble and Woodward County Farm Bureau members visit state Capitol to advocate for agriculture



Woodward County Farm Bureau members visit with Rep. Carl Newton.



Noble County Farm Bureau members met with Rep. Ty Burns at the state Capitol.



OKFB YF&R members advocate for agriculture at the Capitol

OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers met with their legislators and heard from Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell, Sec. of Agriculture Blayne Arthur and chairman of the House ag committee Rep. Dell Kerbs with members of other ag groups. Drought, marijuana, ag sales tax and other ag issues were discussed. Attendees asked questions and received updates about various legislation affecting Oklahoma agriculture.

OKFB praises Oklahoma Attorney General Drummond's action on lesser prairie chicken listing

Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel today thanked Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond for joining a lawsuit challenging a federal rule listing the lesser prairie chicken as endangered and threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

"We appreciate Attorney General Drummond standing up for our family farmers and ranchers, who suffer the most from the lesser prairie chicken's listing," Moesel said. "Our state's farmers and ranchers are tremendous land stewards who manage our state's natural resources, including wide swaths of wildlife habitat. Tying agricultural producers' hands by restricting which land-management practices they can use unnecessarily restricts our members' generations-deep boots-on-the-ground



experience as caretakers of the land.

"We thank the attorney general for recognizing the listing of the lesser prairie chicken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service poses a very real threat to our family agriculturalists, our energy

production sector and our rural way of life."

Drummond filed the suit along with attorneys general from Kansas and Texas against the rule, which went into effect last month.

OKFB to host annual food matching program

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is excited to host the third-annual Community Food Assistance Matching Program to connect county Farm Bureaus with their community.

The program provides matching funds up to \$100 for county Farm Bureaus that donate to a food assistance program. County Farm Bureaus can receive matching funds for donating to local food banks, food pantries, meals on wheels and other food assistance programs with a food donation, food drive or monetary donation.

Farmers and ranchers across Oklahoma create food, fiber and fuel for people in their communities, and OKFB members understand the importance of giving back to their communities.

County Farm Bureaus are encouraged to reach out to their local food assistance program to see what items are needed most to make the county's donation impact even greater.

OKFB will match any donation up to \$100 to the food assistance program of choice. OKFB will send a separate check to the chosen program.

Matching forms must be submitted by **May 31** to receive the OKFB match. To receive the matching funds from OKFB, county Farm Bureaus must host the food drive or make a monetary donation, present the donation to the food assistance program of choice, and fill out the reimbursement form, which can be found on the OKFB application center.

For more information or questions, contact OKFB Communications Specialist Rebekah Nash at (405) 523-2300.

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Ag Day at the Capitol features celebrations of Oklahoma agriculture and producers

Oklahoma Ag Day at the Capitol was held Tuesday, April 13, at the state Capitol. The event featured the agriculture industry and highlighted agriculture across the state.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee hosted a booth and shared the important work of Farm Bureau. A recognition ceremony was held for the Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom awards for 2023. The OKFB WLC is a sponsor for the Ag in the Classroom student and teacher awards each year.

Jackson County Farm Bureau member and long-time agriculture advocate Bob Howard was inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame for his contributions to agriculture and rural Oklahoma. Howard's family received his award and shared the impact Bob Howard made throughout his lifetime in agriculture.



The Howard family accepts Bob Howard's Agriculture Hall of Fame induction plaque.



Robin Bryant WLC member shares the grassroots message on Ag Day at the Capitol.



WLC Committee Chair Mignon Bolay helps present Ag in the Classroom awards.



Nocona Cook (left) State Board of Agriculture member visits with Sen. Brent Howard.