



## Federal Affairs

### President Signs Proclamations on Two New National Monuments in CA

On January 7th, President Biden’s administration announced they would be designating two California areas for conservation protection through national monument proclamations. The designated areas are the Chuckwalla National Monument in the northern part of the state and the Sáttítla National Monument in Eastern Coachella Valley. Together, the proclamations will cover nearly 850,000 acres. Chuckwalla will be managed by the Department of the Interior, while Sáttítla will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service. While hailed by conservation groups, these designations can make it substantially harder to conduct wildfire mitigation, grazing, and other activities critical to forest and public lands management. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; [mviohl@cfbf.com](mailto:mviohl@cfbf.com)

### Forest Service Withdraws Draft National Old Growth Amendment

In a surprising turn, the US Forest Service [announced](#) last week that they would be withdrawing their planned National Old Growth Amendment. The proposal could have led to added protections for so-called “old growth” forests and a different management structure than previously exists. CFBF submitted comments this past fall, essentially urging the Forest Service to reconsider their efforts, or at least work closely with local experts (including those from ag communities). The agency’s announcement noted the difficulties in having a national approach that does not fit well region to region.

Newly elected Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, Rep. Doug LaMalfa (CA-01), released the following remarks, “The Forest Service’s decision to withdraw the National Old Growth Amendment proposal is great news for proper forest management, Western Caucus members have been leading the opposition to this misguided plan that would have been detrimental to maintaining healthy forests and led to greater wildfire risks.” Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; [mviohl@cfbf.com](mailto:mviohl@cfbf.com)

## **New Congress Settles In, Speaker Elected**

With 2025 now upon us, so too is the 119th Congress. Republicans maintained their slim majority in the House and now find themselves in control of the Senate as well. Following their swearing-in, House Republicans received their first real test of how they might operate with such a slim majority when Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA) seemingly failed to receive enough votes in his bid for the Speaker's gavel. However, before the vote officially closed, he received enough support to win the Speakership.

Between now and the presidential inauguration, both chambers and parties are preparing their priorities for the new session. In addition, the Senate is working through incoming President Trump's Cabinet nominees. The president has been hopeful those would be confirmed quickly, but hearings likely won't start until at least this week. The "First 100 Days" is often seen as a critical time for the party in power to not just set an agenda but move quickly on key priorities. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; [mviohl@cfbf.com](mailto:mviohl@cfbf.com)

## **Potential Major Port Strike Averted**

Last week, the US Maritime Alliance and the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) reached a tentative agreement to avoid port strikes across Gulf and East coast ports. This follows a temporary agreement that has been in place since the fall, similarly avoiding significant supply chain disruptions. While the deal has yet to be voted on by union groups, ILA's comments suggest that the port workers are happy with the increased pay rates they've secured, as well as added protections against automation in the industry. AFBF economist Danny Munch released a [Market Intel piece](#) covering the issue last week, detailing the impacts a strike could have had on the US. Of note, many West coast ports rank amongst the most inefficient in the world. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; [mviohl@cfbf.com](mailto:mviohl@cfbf.com)

## **MASC Program Receives Additional Funds**

Last week, USDA added an additional \$650 million towards the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program. Launched last month, the program originally was given \$2 billion to serve as direct payments to specialty crop producers for expanded market opportunities and for managing higher costs. Additionally, while the deadline closed this past Friday, the payment limit for applicants increased from \$125,000 to \$900,000. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; [mviohl@cfbf.com](mailto:mviohl@cfbf.com)



## **CDFA Bans Poultry and Dairy at Fairs**

As of Tuesday, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) State Veterinarian-Director, Dr. Annette Jones, has implemented a ban on all California Poultry and Dairy Exhibitions at Fairs and Shows effective January 7, 2025, until further notice. This action aims to minimize the danger of exposing people and non-infected birds and cows to disease. Please refer to the attachment for details of the ban.

Dairy cattle are defined as follows in (3 CCR §830) (9): “Dairy cattle” means all cattle, regardless of age or sex or current use, that are of a breed(s) or offspring of a breed used to produce milk or other dairy products for human consumption, including, but not limited to, Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, Milking Shorthorn, and Red and Whites.

In positive news, 100 dairies have recovered and been released from quarantine. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; [sfenaroli@cfbf.com](mailto:sfenaroli@cfbf.com)

[CDFA website](#)

- [CA Poultry and Dairy Exhibition Ban](#) link

## **Fish and Wildlife Releases New Wolf Depredation Reports**

Fourteen new depredation determinations have been added for October and November 2024. Four of the confirmed determinations involve a new pair of wolves in Lassen County. The group is currently represented as an Area of Wolf Activity on the agency's current Approximate Area of Gray Wolf Activity map. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; [sfenaroli@cfbf.com](mailto:sfenaroli@cfbf.com)

## **Biden Administration Approves California’s Vehicle Emissions Waiver**

On December 18, the EPA under the Biden Administration approved the federal waiver for the Advanced Clean Cars program which would require automakers to sell more electric vehicles, before banning the sale of new gas-powered cars in 2035. Incoming President Trump is expected to roll back that waiver in addition to others. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; [sfenaroli@cfbf.com](mailto:sfenaroli@cfbf.com)

## **Mountain Lion Research**

Utah State University will begin research to look at non-lethal deterrents for reducing livestock depredation from mountain lions. Their study will cover Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer,

Sierra and Yuba Counties. They will test turbo fladry, pursuit with dogs, fencing and other motion activated devices. If you are interested in participating, contact April Wood, [april.wood@usu.edu](mailto:april.wood@usu.edu) or your local ag commissioner. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; [sfenaroli@cbbf.com](mailto:sfenaroli@cbbf.com)

## **Regenerative Agriculture**

On January 7, after an over two year-long public process, the California State Board of Food and Agriculture unanimously approved a definition for 'Regenerative Agriculture' for use by State of California policies and programs. CDFA set out to define the term as the concept of regenerative agriculture has been increasingly referenced in legislation and has fostered a funding focus in government programs. Throughout the process, Farm Bureau staff provided several comments and recommendations to the State Board to ensure the effort best served the entire agricultural community and Farm Bureau members in this state and that the definition not include specific terms and references in the event of a future legislative interest in codifying the definition.

Ultimately, the adopted definition centers around the concept that regenerative agriculture is an integrated approach to farming and ranching rooted in principles of soil health, biodiversity and ecosystem resiliency, leading to improved target outcomes. The definition also reflects that this practice is not an endpoint but rather a continuous implementation of practices that over time minimize inputs and environmental impacts. The finalized definition will be available on the State Board of Food and Agriculture's website in the coming weeks. Staff contact: Richard Filgas; [rfilgas@cbbf.com](mailto:rfilgas@cbbf.com)

## **Announcements**

### **Major Cannabis Regulatory Deadline Approaching**

You must transition to an annual license before your provisional license expires in 2025.

After January 1, 2025, the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) can no longer renew provisional licenses except for locally verified equity retail licenses with valid provisional licenses who may be eligible for provisional license renewal.

Please be advised: DCC offices will be closed on January 1. If you plan to pay your license fee by cash, please schedule your payment appointment during regular business hours. Failure to comply with applicable laws or resolve outstanding deficiencies and meet requirements for annual licensure can result in suspension or revocation of the provisional license and denial of the annual license application.

For information and guidance, please visit [FAQ: Transitioning a provisional license to an annual license before it expires in 2025](#).

## Commissioner Lara Issues Landmark Regulation To Expand Insurance Access for Californians Amid Growing Climate Risks

Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara announced the final major step in his Sustainable Insurance Strategy, issuing a historic regulation aimed at restoring stability to California's insurance market while addressing the growing risks of wildfires and climate change. The new Net Cost of Reinsurance in Ratemaking Regulation requires insurance companies -- for the first time -- to increase coverage in high-risk areas, ensuring more options for Californians while limiting the costs passed on to consumers. The regulation works hand-in-hand with other reforms that Commissioner Lara has spearheaded that will have the effect of increasing insurance coverage options for Californians across the state.

Reinsurance is a financial tool that is part of how insurance companies manage their risk portfolios associated with the policies they write to homeowners and business owners. Its roots date back to the 14th century, when merchants and traders sought ways to spread the risks of perilous ocean voyages, often relying on multiple insurers to cover their ventures. Today, as climate risks escalate across the nation, reinsurance has become an even more imperative component of insurance companies operating in high-risk and distressed areas, including California. Modernizing regulations around reinsurance will enable insurance companies to expand coverage and write more policies in communities across the state facing greater risk, ensuring stability and resilience in our insurance market.

All other states except California allow for costs of reinsurance in rates and, in 2023, the [first systematic review of climate risk strategies](#) by Ceres and the California Department of Insurance revealed that reinsurance is the primary strategy most insurance companies use to continue to write and expand coverage in higher risk parts of California and across the country.