

It is that time of the year again when all of our distinguished elected officials have gathered in the state capital to make laws and decide the future of our great state. This year is particularly crucial in that proponents of higher taxes and environmental activists are pressing their agendas to the detriment of our industry.

*Keep your eye  
on legislature  
— your job  
depends on it*

On the taxation front, there is considerable pressure from our illustrious legislative body to force you and me to pay more in a number of areas touching this association.

There is a good chance that we will be paying a sales tax on the membership dues we pay to be a member of benevolent societies such as ours.

Lobbyist Bobby Brantley says, however, that the “tax” issues will be dealt with during a special session of the legislature.

It is prudent to expect every segment of the golf industry to be affected, areas like professional lesson fees, annual memberships and fees for licenses and permits will like increase.

The environmental activist is also hard at work trying to make our life in the golf industry not just difficult but, if successful, impossible to continue. At issue here is who will be regulating the use of pesticides in this state. We have introduced legislation called the “preemption bill”. Basically what this says is that the Department of

Agriculture and Consumer Services would have the authority to set pesticide rules and regulations across the entire state and these rules would pre-empt any local rules.

What the environmentalist wants is the ability of local rule. This simply is that each local municipality or county could arbitrarily set the rules of what you could and could not do in applying pesticides to your golf course. It is easy to envision emotional and irrational activists appearing before the local elected officials pleading their doomsday stories to get their agendas accepted.

This is a scary situation, to think that our industry could be governed by people operating from ignorance instead of scientific data. That these rules will change as you cross city boundaries, and are likely to change again at the whim of the local council is a very unsettling situation. This job is difficult enough without having to live by rules created by the local “condo commandos.”

At this time the issue is unsettled. Fortunately, we have good people in Tallahassee to fight our side of the battle: Bobby Brantley of the Florida Golf Council and Tom Latta of the Florida Turfgrass Association. Without them we would be in a much worse situation.

This year’s legislative session has furthered my conviction that more than ever before we need the Florida Golf Council representing us in Tallahassee. Everyone has to do their part. Bobby is doing his and we need to do ours. If you are not a member of the FGC, please join today. You never know. The job you save may be your own.



Tom Benefield, CGCSA  
FGCSA President