

GOVERNMENT UPDATE

Florida bill would mandate irrigation

A bill reportedly will be introduced in the next Florida legislative session that would mandate testing and licensing for all irrigation contractors.

The Florida Irrigation Society supports the bill, according to FIS Executive Director Fred McGee.

Saying that as much as 75 percent of Florida's water usage is directed toward irrigation of some type, McGee said, "It's almost

criminal to allow such a great portion of our water resources to be controlled by individuals who have never been certified as competent."

McGee said the state has no expressed policy or code that addresses installation and fabrication of complete irrigation systems.

Oregon

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That brought a renewed burst of legislative action by environmentalists and others. The Oregon Senate and House are hearing three bills, all of which would ban field burning. One would stop field burning and propane-flame sanitation immediately; the others would stop it in one year or two years, respectively.

Seed industry officials involved in the issue feel a final negotiated bill will be passed by the first of July.

It is a serious issue for the seed industry and the golf courses and others who depend on the seeds in their businesses.

"This cause a reduction in yield and... a significant problem for the industry in controlling diseases and weeds that may infest grass seed fields," said David Nelson, executive director of the Oregon Fine Fescue Commission in Salem, Ore. "It would give us major quality-control headaches."

Nelson said if the ban is passed, prices of quality seeds will rise and supply will decrease.

He added that the "significant numbers" of Oregon seed companies, which employ about 10,000 people, would look to move to other places.

Washington supplies the bulk of U.S.-produced bluegrass but little else. Argentina wants to grow seed, and China "desperately" wants to get into the seed business, Nelson said. "I don't know where, but there's another place somewhere in the world that could grow seed like Oregon."

Nelson said he sees all three bills as "vehicles to use for rewriting the final bill — whatever that may be — after a negotiation process.

But he said there's little to negotiate.

"There's not too much we can do," he said. "There are a few things we have learned how to do: For instance, propane flaming is a substitutable alternative (to burning) for some of the newer turf-type ryegrasses."

The Oregon Seed Council, Oregon Seed Trade Association and Oregon State University

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NCA hires Washington veteran

The National Club Association has appointed Thomas M. Walsh director of government relations, according to NCA Executive Vice President Gerard F. Hurley.

"With his unique background in legal, legislative and tax matters (Walsh) is a valuable asset to the association and the private club community," Hurley said.

Walsh, an adjunct professor of political science at Catholic University, joins NCA after four years of extensive legal and legislative work in private practice. He served as tax counsel for the U.S. Senate

Committee on Small Business in 1984-85, advising the committee and its members on tax and energy issues.

From 1978-84 Walsh provided legislative assistance to U.S. Sen. Dale Bumpers. He advised Bumpers and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on all energy matters coming before committees and the Senate.

Walsh also served two years as senior tax attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, a post he took after four years as attorney for the Office of the Solicitor at the

Federal Power Commission, now the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Walsh said he looks forward "to applying my experience to the challenges that lie ahead in furthering the association's interest and protecting the rights of the nation's private clubs."

NCA is composed of 1,000 private social, athletic and recreational clubs, including 700 golf facilities, and is the only trade association serving the business, legal and legislative interests of private clubs nationwide.

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