

California EPA to consolidate its many environmental laws

By BARNABY WICKHAM

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The state Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has undertaken plans to consolidate California's myriad environmental laws into a single, unified statute.

This statute would organize laws along functional lines that cut across environmental concerns (such as permitting and enforcement), in place of the current divisions along lines of air and water quality, solid and hazardous waste, pesticides and scientific risk assessment.

Although the proposed consolidation of legislation would alter regulation use of reclaimed water, fertilizers and pesticides, Deputy Secretary of the California EPA Mike Kahoe said he was not aware of any changes that would adversely affect golf courses. According to Kahoe, the purpose of the change is intended to cut out duplication and overlap.

A more consistent set of requirements would allow more coordination among regulating agencies, Kahoe said. "This would allow us to be more focused on what are the true environmental risks," he said.

Golf course architect Ted Robinson, a veteran of design in the West, said consolidation of environmental laws to a singular source could be beneficial to the California golf industry.

"The major problem [in golf course development] is that you don't know what the rules are. To find out, you must test the waters, which can be an expensive process," he said.

A task force consisting of legal experts and environmental representatives is charged with developing a proposal by year's end. Kahoe said this proposal should be introduced to the Legislature in January 1995.

PVP legislation

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another variety, he must reach an agreement to pay a royalty for, in essence, using their research.

"As an example," said Skip Lynch, marketing director for Seed Research of Oregon, "if you have a Kentucky bluegrass like Midnight which took a lot of years and money to develop... say someone at another company or university took a gene for Roundup resistance and inserted it into Midnight, because of way bluegrasses operate... you would have all the turf characteristics of Midnight and protection from Roundup. You have a unique characteristic for PVP but are taking advantage of all the research for Midnight.

The new law is also expected to get rid of the Farmer Save Exemption. In the past, a farmer could save seed from his own harvest to plant his own fields with. "It turned into a gray market," Lynch said. "As long as his primary business was a farm, he could sell the seed to other farmers."

Companies now won't be allowed to save enough seed to plant beyond their own land.

"The seed industry has not had necessarily the best reputation in the turf industry," Lynch said. "We're sometimes the ugly sister of the turf industry, and anything that can be done to clean up and police the PVP is going to be good for the industry as a whole."



Pesticide reforms

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Though it doesn't target any particular pesticide, "There is also a good deal of discussion that addresses the speed by which [pesticide] registration and reregistration is done," Scott said.

Scott also expressed the need to speed up the "tedious and time-consuming" process for cancellation of pesticides introduced before the passage of the stricter Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) in 1987.

Raymond Davies, head superintendent at Virginia Country Club in Huntington, Calif., does not see anything to be concerned about with the proposed legislation. He said he sees no changes in the administration's pesticide agenda to target "bad actors" for market removal and to promote biological products.

Davies emphasized the government has not targeted certain pesticides for elimination. "My opinion is, they are just trying to reduce overlap from a cost standpoint," he said.

If hearings are held this summer, which seems possible to Scott, a new pesticide bill may be out as early as October. If there are no hearings this summer, passage of the bill could carry into January 1995, if it passes at all.

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The EPA has also proposed the nation's first-ever emission standards to protect public health by reducing exhaust pollution from gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment.

According to the EPA's Mike Scott, buyers will experience a cost increase across the board of one to three percent. "Industry members say it will probably be closer to one percent or less," he said.

The proposed legislation comprises two phases.

Phase I, which would take effect in 1998, would require, among other things, exhaust emission standards to which manufacturers would comply by improving the air and fuel mixture for more complete fuel combustion. In Phase II, which is incomplete at this point, the EPA will reevaluate the appropriate level of standards, said Scott.

Barring any surprises, the law will be passed in no more than six months, he added.

Boon to sod growers

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very limited supply."

"Sod farms are doing very, very well," agreed superintendent Jerry Lemons of Old Hickory Country Club in Hermitage, Tenn., adding that "most all courses are open, but horrible. Some lost 100 percent of their Bermudagrass."

Some superintendents have decided to resprig their courses with zoysiagrass, but those supplies went mainly dry until a mid-to late-July harvest, O'Brien said. Those people hope to avoid future devastation, he said, adding: "Everybody with zoysia fairways in the Southeast — approximately 15 — are in wonderful shape."

"It's hectic," said Richard Petrina, office manager for Thomas Bros., a sod producer in Fayetteville, Tenn. "Everyone wants grass today. But we're scheduling for a week from now. We're running five trucks constantly, plus a leased truck sometimes."

"I've been in the sod business for nine years and never seen anything like this. That January freeze did a world of damage," said Chris Staples, officer manager for North Georgia Turf in Newman, Ga., who added that the spring buying spree follows another at the end of 1993.

Sod companies "are working around the clock trying to get everybody sprigged," commiserated Dan Gibson, superintendent of golf operations for the Metro Board of Parks and Recreation in Nashville, Tenn., which operates seven golf courses. "It's a

FSGC HONORS DAVIS OF R&D

LAKE WALES, Fla. — Ed Davis of R&D Sod Farms, Inc. has been honored by the Florida Sod Growers Cooperative (FSGC) for his years of dedication and hard work on behalf of the turfgrass industry.

Ray Caruthers of Multi-Turf, Inc. made the special presentation to R&D's Davis during the FSGC Field Day, held here in late May at the Gary Resmondo Sod Farm.

mad fight to try to get them scheduled because everybody's after them.

"They don't have enough machines, or enough trained help to run them. They're run ragged. It's a good business to be in right now, but a harrowing experience because they can't take care of everybody."

Noting that North Georgia Turf has helped "a lot" of golf courses replace turf in Tennessee and north Georgia, Staples said supplies were running thin. "We're waiting on grow-ins," he said. "Supply will build back up the end of July or early August."

He said six superintendents have called his firm to replace Bermudagrass with El Toro zoysiagrass sod. Most sod farms did not lose turf because they mow it high. Thomas Bros., however, saw its farm flood and freeze, killing most of its Bermudagrass and a lot of zoysia. To meet demand, it was forced to lease another company's sod farm — Emerald Acres in South Huntsville, Ala.

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