

PFA Urges Action On Local Tax Reform

CAMP HILL — "Pennsylvania's farmers would have an additional reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving if the General Assembly was allowed to act on the long overdue local tax reform legislation still in conference committee," said Keith Eckel, president of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA).

Eckel said, "We can't believe that some members of the tax

reform conference committee are going to let time run out on the legislation without giving it the opportunity of a floor vote. They've had two years to debate the issue. Now it's time to act.

"The current local tax structure with its heavy dependence on property taxes is grossly unfair to farmers who require a lot of land and buildings for their crops and livestock. It also places an unfair

burden on our senior citizens who are retired and living on fixed incomes. We have been waiting for over 30 years for the system to be corrected and now the time has come -- almost.

"On behalf of farm families across our great state, I am calling on the two senators who have not yet signed the conference report -- Senators John Stauffer of Chester County and David Brightbill of Lebanon County -- to sign it now and give all our elected leaders a chance to pass judgement on its

merits. We trust they will agree with our members that it is a long overdue, much needed reform."

The tax reform measure would eliminate the so-called nuisance

taxes, such as occupation and per capita taxes, and would allow municipalities and school districts to offset a portion of property taxes with a local income tax.

Senate Allows Milk Board to Set Fees

HARRISBURG — The Senate passed legislation to allow the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board, which sets minimum milk prices in Pennsylvania, to periodically set various fees by regulation, according to Senator Edward Helfrick (R-27).

Helfrick, chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, explained that House Bill 2100 covers milk dealer license fees, milk hauler license fees, milk tester certificates, and fees paid by milk weighers or samplers. Any fee change would be subject to the Regulatory Review Act.

Presently, all fee schedule changes require legislative amendments to the law, and there have been no changes since 1978.

"We give the board more control over its fiscal affairs by allowing it to set fees through regulation," Helfrick said. "We also provide a forum for greater input from milk producers and buyers through Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) hearings."

The legislation is supported by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board, the State Grange, the Pennsylvania Farmers Association, and the Pennsylvania Milk Dealers Association.



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