



December 28, 2016

Legislative Report No. 1 2017 Kentucky General Assembly

The 2017 Session of the Kentucky General Assembly is set to begin at noon, on Tuesday, January 3, with Part I and adjourn of Friday, January 6. Part II of the session will convene on Tuesday, February 7 and adjourn on Monday, March 15. The General Assembly will then recess for a ten-day veto period which is scheduled to begin on March 16 and the legislature is scheduled to adjourn sine die on March 30.

As a result of the November election the republicans took the majority in the House of Representatives for the first time in over 90 years. During the first week of session they will officially elect their leadership. The new leadership team for the House Republicans will be:

Jeff Hoover, from Russell County, Speaker
David Osborne, from Oldham County, Speaker Pro Tempore
Jonathan Shell, from Garrard County, Majority Floor Leader
David Meade, from Lincoln County, Majority Caucus Chair
Kevin Bratcher, from Jefferson County, Majority Whip

The House Democrats are planning to elect their leadership on January 3.

The Senate majority leadership will also be officially elected the first week of the session. There are no changes in the Senate majority leadership from last session and the Senate Democrats will make only one change in their leadership team. Senator Dorsey Ridley will be the new Democratic Caucus Chair.

Most of the Legislative Action Requests you will receive throughout the upcoming session will give Farm Bureau's position on bills, along with an explanation of the bill and the policy to support our position. They will usually request that you contact your senator or representative regarding a particular issue. Contacting your member of the General Assembly is the key component of implementing our policy. These requests will be sent late in the week and we hope that you will help us implement your policy by using it to help contact your legislator.

2017 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Kentucky Farm Bureau legislative priorities were approved by the State Board of Directors following our 97th Annual Meeting. Please acquaint yourself with the priorities listed below and keep them as a reference throughout the session. We hope you will find these helpful as you discuss various legislative matters with your representative and senator during the months ahead. Each member of the Kentucky General Assembly will receive a copy of our 2017 State Priority Issues.

2017 STATE PRIORITY ISSUES

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Maintain allocating 50% of the Master Settlement Agreement funds to the Agricultural Development Board, and funds be spent for the purpose of improving the net farm income of individual farmers in production agriculture.
- Support continued funding of the Soil Erosion & Water Quality Cost-Share Program.
- Support an efficient, well-administered and adequately financed Kentucky Department of Agriculture.
- Recommend sufficient funding be made available to maintain a strong grain elevator inspection program for the protection of farmers, and protect the farmer-financed Grain Insurance Program.

TAXATION

- Kentucky's tax code should be reformed based on sound economic principles to create a more competitive business climate.
- Strongly oppose freezing the state real property tax rate.
- Support the current provisions of House Bill 44 (KRS 132.010). Revenue from property taxes should continue to be limited to 4% plus new growth. Proposals to exceed 4% should automatically go to the voters.
- Maintain Kentucky's sales tax exemptions for production agriculture.

HIGHWAYS, ROADS, AND BRIDGES

- Support the rural secondary and county road aid programs and continuation of the 22.2% allocation of the state gasoline tax revenue for rural roads.

WATER RESOURCES

- Support the Kentucky Water Resources Board and advocate a coordinated effort to manage water resource projects across the Commonwealth.
- State water resource policy and regulations should be based on adequate scientific research data.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

- Seek effective wildlife management that will reduce the wildlife population in an effort to alleviate continued crop and livestock losses, automobile accidents, human injuries, and loss of life.

RURAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Support broadband and high speed internet service being available for the benefit of all Kentuckians.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

- Oppose any agency exceeding legislative intent in the implementation of regulations.
- Oppose the power of eminent domain being used to take private property for private use.

FORESTRY

- Support forestry initiatives that enhance the economy and create opportunities for woodland owners.

WHAT CAN YOUR COUNTY DO TO PREPARE FOR THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION?

(1) The month of January will be an excellent time to meet with your legislators and discuss priority issues. Then check each week's legislative reports to monitor progress and continue to communicate with your legislator as issues begin to move through the system. Remember, action requests are just that - a request for you to call your senator or representative and ask for their support for our position.

(2) Ask your county Legislative Action Committee to develop a schedule of meetings to plan further action, as the need arises during the session. It is important that you maintain personal contact with your senator and representative as Farm Bureau's priority issues start to move through the legislative process. Several counties have weekly meeting times set up on Saturday mornings with their legislators.

(3) Stay informed.....Know about the issues and Farm Bureau's position. It takes everyone's commitment for Farm Bureau to be successful!

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

During the week, you may reach your representative and senator in Frankfort by calling 502.564.8100.

If you do not desire to talk to your state legislator immediately or you just want to leave a message, you may dial toll-free 800.372.7181. An answering service will take your message for your representative or senator. The legislative calendar information line is 800.633.9650, the bill status line is 866.840.2835, and the Governor's office number is 502.564.2611.

If you desire to e-mail your representative or senator, [click here](#) for a list of e-mail addresses for members of the Kentucky General Assembly. Find your legislator and click on his or her name to access their e-mail address.

YOUR LOBBYISTS

Those who are registered to lobby for Kentucky Farm Bureau for the 2016 session are: Jeff Harper, Public Affairs Director, extension 5104; Bryan Alvey, extension 7218; Tony Sholar, extension 5121; and David S. Beck, extension 5101. If you would like to call your lobbyists during the evening, call 502.352.4280 at the Frankfort headquarters or call 502.495.5000 and key in their extensions.

If you would like to contact one of your lobbyists during the day, please call Sara Stivers at 502.495.5121 and she will put you in touch with one of them.

KEEP ALL LEGISLATIVE ACTION REQUESTS FOR FUTURE USE

We suggest that you keep a record of the Legislative Action Requests on file because, on occasion, we may refer to a previous report as a source of more details regarding an issue.

FUTURE DATES OF INTEREST

January 3.....	2017 General Assembly Part I Convenes
January 16.....	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 7.....	2017 General Assembly Part II Convenes
February 10.....	Last Day for New Bill Request
February 17.....	Last Day for New Senate Bills
February 20.....	President's Day Holiday
February 21.....	Last Day for New House Bills
March 10 & 13.....	Legislative Holidays
March 14 & 15.....	Concurrence Only
March 16–27.....	Veto Period
March 28.....	Legislative Holiday
March 30	General Assembly, Sine Die