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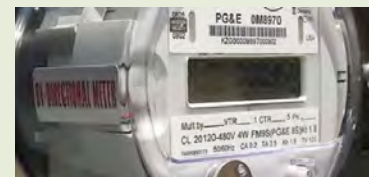


October 22, 2013

## Renewable Energy Bill (AB 327) Signed into Law

On Monday, October 7th, Governor Brown signed [AB 327](#) into law, capping a controversial bill's long journey through the Legislature and onto the books.

CalCAN watched closely as this bill made its way to the Governor's desk. As written, AB 327 could impact the implementation of the CalCAN-supported Net Energy Metering bill [SB 594](#), which was passed in 2012 and [validated last month](#) by the California Public Utilities Commission.



Indeed, in its final form, AB 327 holds major ramifications for the future of renewable energy production in the state. But exactly what the bill's impact on small-scale distributed renewable energy generation will be – particularly in the area of on-farm production – remains to be seen.

[Read more...](#)

## New CDFA Report Identifies Adaptation Strategies

## for California Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) recently released a [new report](#) outlining recommendations for agriculture's ongoing adaptation to climate change. The report was based in large part on the input of a Climate Change Consortium comprised of stakeholders from the California agriculture community, including CalCAN.



The report, titled "[The Climate Change Consortium for Specialty Crops: Impacts and Strategies for Resilience](#)," identifies known challenges – such as higher overall temperatures, reduced water supply and quality, and unpredictable changes to pest and pollination dynamics – that farmers of specialty crops will increasingly confront due to climate change.

The paper acknowledges that growers have already found ways to mitigate some of these impacts, which may often be experienced as increases in weather variability and extremes. It also concludes that agricultural adaptation and preparedness for climate events will ultimately depend on farmers having access to “agricultural support services, scientific answers to fundamental climate change impact questions, investment in planning and preparedness, and technological innovations” (pg. 4). The Consortium identified a role for state agencies, including the CDFA, to support the agriculture sector in shoring up its climate adaptation capacity.

[Read more...](#)

## Paying Attention to Soil Carbon

The University of California magazine California Agriculture recently published a [report](#) that measured soil carbon levels in three perennial cropping systems across Northern California. This study, which was funded by the USDA, brings California one step closer to realizing programs for agriculture that could incentivize sustainable soil management practices and provide financial benefits to farmers.

With a focus on the lesser-understood “high-value specialty perennial crops,” such as walnuts, almonds and wine grapes, researchers in the study sought to develop baseline soil carbon estimates for a variety of agricultural land types and management systems. They gathered data by implementing long-term monitoring networks in perennial crop soils, using a research methodology that could serve as a model for future carbon storage studies.

[Read more...](#)

## Movement on the Farm Bill

*The following is reposted with permission from the [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#).*



### National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Late on Wednesday, October 16, Congress passed a bill to fund the government through January 15 and raise the debt limit until February 7. The bill ends a partial government shutdown that lasted 16 days, and averts a default that could have occurred had the U.S. debt limit been reached. However, because the deal is short-term, Congress will have to revisit the same issues once again this fall and winter.

Along side the short-term funding bill (known as a continuing resolution, or CR) and debt ceiling increase, Congress directed itself to negotiate a FY 2014 budget resolution and to report a deal by December 13. Both the House and the Senate passed their respective budget resolutions earlier this spring, but a conference committee was not established until this week. Key House and Senate Republicans had blocked a budget conference repeatedly over the past six months over a set of preconditions they wanted agreed to at the outset. This week they dropped those preconditions. This is the first time since the 2010 elections that Congress has established a conference committee to negotiate a bicameral budget resolution.

*CalCAN note: There are three California representatives on the conference committee.*

[Read more...](#)

## Funding Opportunities

### Western SARE Farmer-Rancher Grants

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program has issued a call for proposals for Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grants for 2014. A producer, working with a technical advisor, develops a proposal to conduct both research and education on a sustainable-agriculture topic. Up to \$15,000 per proposal is allowed for a single producer and up to \$25,000 is allowed for three or more producers. Proposals are due Dec. 4, 2013.

Click [here](#) for more information.

### EQIP Grants

EQIP is a continuous sign-up, voluntary, conservation program and applications can be submitted throughout the year. An EQIP application received by Nov. 15, 2013, will be considered first for FY 2014 funding; applications received after Nov. 15, 2013, may be

considered later in the year depending on funding availability.

EQIP, NRCS's largest conservation program, helps eligible producers plan and implement conservation practices that address a wide range of natural resource concerns and provide opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.

For additional information, eligible producers (including farmers, ranchers, Tribes and non-industrial private timber managers) are encouraged to contact their local NRCS Service Center. Service center locations and more information on the programs can be found at [www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov).

#### **Environmental Solutions for Communities Grant Program**

Wells Fargo and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation seek to promote sustainable communities by supporting highly visible projects that link economic development and community well-being to the stewardship and health of the environment. One funding priority is enhancing stewardship on private agricultural lands. Proposals are due by December 16, 2013.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## **Events**

#### **Sustainable Ag Expo**

November 18 and 19, 2013 • San Luis Obispo

The 9th Annual Sustainable Ag Expo provides a unique opportunity for farmers, ag professionals, and pest control advisors representing a variety of operations to learn about the latest in farming research, resource issues, and business trends related to sustainable agriculture.

Click [here](#) for more information.

#### **Food, Water, Climate, People and the Land that Ties it all Together**

Nov. 22, 2013, 10:00am – 1:00pm • San Jose

Hosted by the Bay Area Open Space Council, this Harvest Gathering will focus on the future of conserving land and its importance to sustaining the Bay Area's water, health and food systems as our climate changes.

Speakers include:

- Andrea Mackenzie, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
- Carol Presley, Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Bill Shoe, Santa Clara County Planning
- Eli Zigas, SPUR

Click [here](#) to register.

#### **Food Safety Workshops for Growers**

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is hosting free informational workshops for farmers to discuss how to comment to the FDA on proposed food safety regulations and answer questions.

Oct. 18, 3-5pm, Glide Ranch in Davis, CA (RSVP [here](#))

Oct. 24, 3-5pm, California Grill, Freedom, CA (RSVP [here](#))  
Nov. 4, in the afternoon, Chico (place and time TBD)

**Save the Date: Soil's Role in Restoring Ecosystem Services**

March 6-9, 2014 • Sacramento

Soil sustains life and is one of our most important natural resources. This conference will address soil and its biodiversity as providers of ecosystem services that benefit humankind. Strengths and weaknesses in the state of our knowledge will be evaluated, cross-disciplinary synergies will be encouraged, and research needs will be prioritized to gain understanding of soils' roles in: climate change adaptation and mitigation, food and energy security, water protection, biotechnology for human health, ecological sustainability, and slowing of desertification.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Jobs

**Field Representative, Greenbelt Alliance**

Greenbelt Alliance seeks an experienced candidate for the position of Field Representative based in Santa Rosa. The Field Representative will lead advocacy efforts to protect open space and encourage smart growth in Sonoma, Marin, and Napa counties. To accomplish these goals, the Field Representative will run Greenbelt Alliance's Santa Rosa office as the local center for land use advocacy and provide leadership on our critical efforts to protect farmland and open space, encourage infill development that serves people across the socio-economic spectrum in all three counties.

Click [here](#) for more information.

**Regional Director: Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Center**

WSARE is a well-established regional program that is part of the national Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). The WSARE program encourages sustainable farming and ranching practices that are productive, economically successful, environmentally sound and socially rewarding.

The Regional Director holds a key leadership position that is responsible for jointly coordinating a mission-oriented program with an annual budget of approximately \$4 million and a staff of approximately 8 people. This position works closely with regional PDP Coordinator and the WSARE Administrative Council (AC) which is designated in statute to include representatives from throughout the region. The AC works with the Regional Director and the PDP Coordinator to establish the programs and policies that are implemented by the Regional Director and staff.

Click [here](#) for more information.