

Resolutions Committee makes recommendations

The Cooperative Network Resolutions Committee met July 20 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where members took action on legislative and regulatory resolutions pertaining to Minnesota and Wisconsin. Members from credit union, dairy, Farm Credit, local supply, regional supply, service, utility distribution, and utility generation and transmission sectors attended the meeting in person. The committee will advance the following changes to the Cooperative Network board of directors:

MINNESOTA

- **AG 2.02 Biodiesel and Ethanol.** Replace all references to the word “sustainable” with “viable,” and all references to the word “sustainability” with “viability.”
- **HO 2.04 Clarifying Statutes Governing Housing Co-op Director Liability.** Delete the resolution due to it being contained within HO 2.04.
- **HO 2.05 Researching Development of Separate Housing Co-op Statute.** Update the resolution to reflect the continuation of this initiative.

MINNESOTA & WISCONSIN

- **AG 1.08 Integrity of Organic Agriculture.** Add language noting that the National Organic Standards Board includes numerous stakeholders within the organic community.
- **AG 1.15 Biotechnology and Genetically Enhanced Products and Dairy Product Labeling.** Delete “Cooperative Network opposes mandatory labeling of federally approved products that contain genetically enhanced traits.”
- **AG 1.29 Card Processing Fees and Cash Discounts (previously titled Credit Card Processing Fees and Cash Discounts).** Delete “Since credit card processing fees are based on a percentage of the sale, as retail prices move higher, more consumers make credit purchases.”
- **AG 1.33 Animal Health and Crop Protection Products in Food Production.** Add “Regulations developed for neonicotinoid use should be science-based, focus on agricultural productivity, and improve pollinator

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Possible special session remains on hold

Legislative leaders have continued to discuss the prospects for a special session in recent weeks. While talks earlier this summer had stalled between Gov. Mark Dayton, House Speaker Kurt Daudt (R-Crown), and Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), a breakthrough occurred last month when Dayton indicated that he would acquiesce on his request that additional spending on specific state programs be a condition for holding a special session.

The leaders emerged from a July gathering indicating the third week of

August would be their target for holding a special session. At stake will be three major pieces of legislation that were left hanging in the balance when the 2016 regular session ended May 23. Among them are the tax, bonding, and transportation finance bills. One of the main points that needs to be resolved between the DFL and GOP is light rail transit funding in the Twin Cities. Several other bills vetoed by the governor could be resurrected if a special session is called later this month. More should be known after the Aug. 9 primary elections.

National Co-op Month theme announced



The National Co-op Month theme for October is “Cooperatives Build,” inviting cooperatives to showcase the specific ways they build trust, community, jobs, a better world, and more.

This year’s campaign was developed by a national Cooperative Communicators Association committee led by Cooperative Network with participation from members Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, GROWMARK, and United Farmers Cooperative, as well as the Minnesota Cooperative Education Foundation. The CHS Foundation provided funding support.

Materials are available online at coopmonth.coop and will be added to through October.



Minnesota DNR releases buffer maps

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently released a map of public waters and ditches that will require permanent vegetative buffers or alternative water quality practices. The interactive map is available at dnr.state.mn/buffers.

Cooperative Network-supported legislation that provides buffer clarification to landowners, operators, and government officials was signed into law this year. Two major provisions restrict the DNR from mapping or mandating buffers on private ditches and require existing public waters inventory to be used when mapping public waters. The law also states that landowner compensation will be based on land value before buffers are installed, and it establishes a state-funded aid program for local government to implement buffer requirements.

The original 2015 legislation supported by Gov. Mark Dayton proposed mandatory 50-foot buffer strips from the state's bodies of water. Cooperative Network opposed the proposal and supported provisions included in legislation authored by Rep. Paul Torkelson (R-Hanska) and Sen. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook).

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) board passed a resolution in June that will enable certification in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) to qualify as an approved alternative water quality protection practice. Farmers who become certified will automatically meet state buffer law requirements. MAWQCP information is at mda.state.mn.us/awqcp.

The DNR has announced there will be a series of meetings with local governments to help coordinate the buffer implementation process.

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health. Science continues to show use of neonicotinoid pesticides protects crops from insect damage, increases agricultural productivity, and are safe to use. Agriculture is committed to protecting pollinators while using the body of science on neonicotinoids to guide future use.”

- **CU 1.07 Credit Unions Fighting Predatory Practices, Helping Low-Wealth Individuals.** Delete “the Real Solutions and Real Deals” language.
- **GC 1.01 Cooperative Development Services.** Replace “Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund” with “Shared Capital Cooperative.”
- **GC 1.12 Transportation.** Revise part #6 on expansion of rail service.
- **IN 1.05 Small Mutual Investment Income.** Delete.
- **UT 1.02 State Regulation of Utility Cooperatives.** Change “customers” to “members.”
- **UT 1.06 Alternative Energy.** Add “geothermal” to types of energy sources.

A full copy of Cooperative Network's resolutions is available at cooperativenetwork.coop under "Legislative/Regulatory." Contact Patrick Murray, patrick.murray@cooperativenetwork.coop or (651) 280-4901, with questions or to learn how to get involved with the Resolutions Committee.

Drone legislation signed into law

On July 15, President Barack Obama approved a bill that streamlines the permitting process for drone use; allows

drones to fly beyond the line-of-sight and at nighttime to conduct duties aligning with federal, state, or local regulations; and establishes a process to restrict drone operation near energy production, transmission, and distribution facilities and equipment, oil refineries, and chemical facilities. The law also increases civil penalties to \$20,000 for drone users who interfere with law enforcement or emergency response activities.

Agricultural, insurance, and utilities cooperatives have increasingly used drones to more efficiently and cost-effectively serve their members.

Cooperative Network Dispatch

Prepared and distributed to provide timely information on matters pertaining to Minnesota's member-owned cooperatives.

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Upcoming Events

September 21

Minnesota Credit Issues Conference

Hear the latest on issues such as credit card security; debt collection and bankruptcy; state filing processes; and dealing with trusts, LLCs, and DBAs. Early registration ends Aug. 24. Details are online at cooperativenetwork.coop.

October 19

Employment Law Update

Discuss the most pressing employment law issues, case studies, and information related to new federal requirements for overtime pay, personal vs. employer liability, and workplace appearance. Early registration ends Sept. 21. Details are online at cooperativenetwork.coop.

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Co-op Calendar

Aug. 9—Electric Sector Meeting, St. Cloud, Minn.

Sept. 7—Farm Supply, Grain, and Fuel Committee Meeting, Brainerd, Minn.

Sept. 21—Minnesota Credit Issues Conference, St. Cloud, Minn.

Oct. 19—Employment Law Update, Eau Claire, Wis..

Nov. 14-16—Cooperative Network Annual Meeting, Stevens Point, Wis.

For more information about these events, call (651) 228-0213 or go to www.cooperativenetwork.coop.