

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Meeting Jointly
Friday, February 9, 2024
10:00 AM
Room B, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Matt Stone, Vice-Chair; Tyler Dees, Ben Gilmore, Fredrick J. Love; Representatives Jack Fortner, Chair; Roger D. Lynch, Vice-Chair; Brandon Achor, Howard M. Beaty, Jr., Harlan Breaux, Cameron Cooper, Denise Garner, Delia J. Haak, RJ Hawk, Steve Hollowell, Stephen Magie, Ron McNair, Kendra Moore, Chad Puryear, Danny Watson, and Carlton Wing

Other members present: Senators Jim Dotson, Bryan King, Blake Johnson; Representatives Wade Andrews, Mark Berry, Stan Berry, Joey Carr, Carol Dalby, Jon Eubanks, DeAnna Hodges, Rick McClure, Tippi McCullough, Stetson Painter, Marcus Richmond, Joy Springer, and Trey Steimel

Representative Fortner called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the November 30, 2023, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit C]

Representative Garner made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Hawk, and the motion carried.

County Fair Funding Update

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Weldon Wynn, Arkansas Fair Managers Association, discussed the impact that state fairs have on the community.

Research and Promotion Board Update

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, provided an update regarding the six research and promotion boards in the state. He noted that the largest goal within the boards is to be open and transparent by having virtual options for the meetings.

Update on Bird Disposal Related to Cook Venture [Handout F1-F3]

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Patrick Fisk, Director, Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Division, discussed the Cook Venture bird disposal. Local farmers provided testimony regarding their experiences of the depopulation of their poultry. Senator King provided testimony on how this issue effected his constituents.

Discussion on Interim Resolution on Farm Land and Solar Panels [Exhibit G] [Handout G1-G2]

Rodney Baker, Capitol Concepts LLC, presented a resolution for solar panel farms to be classified as agriculture, rather than wetlands, when the solar panels are removed.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.