Rangeland Conservation Summit

Politics
(The other red meat...)

January 21, 2014
Why Bother?

- 1,000,000,000,000 reasons
  - That’s the size of the recent one-year spending agreement—on “discretionary” spending alone
- Annual “mandatory” spending is roughly twice that
  - Farm Bill programs are mostly “mandatory”
- “Tax expenditures” are on top of both
Projected Mandatory and Discretionary Spending and Interest on Federal Debt (Fiscal Year 2014)

- Mandatory Spending: 64%
- Discretionary Spending: 30%
- Interest on Federal Debt: 6%

Source: OMB National Priorities Project
President's Proposed Mandatory Spending (Fiscal Year 2014)

- Social Security, Unemployment & Labor: 51%
- Medicare & Health: 36%
- Transportation: 5%
- Veterans Benefits: 3%
- Food & Agriculture: 5%

Source: OMB National Priorities Project
Tax Breaks Are as Large as All Discretionary Spending (Fiscal Year 2014)

- Tax Breaks: $1.18 trillion
- Discretionary Spending: $1.15 trillion

Source: OMB National Priorities Project
And Regulations, too...

- Permits for restoration work
  - Streamlined processes
- Mitigation
  - Role of Working Lands Easements
Past progress

- **Farm Bill:**
  - Grasslands Reserve Program
    - Authorized in 2002
    - Retained in 2008
  - Wetlands Reserve Program
    - Reserved Rights Pilot Program

- **Tax Policy:**
  - Enhanced Income Tax Deduction for donated easements
2013 Priorities

- **Farm Bill**
  - Easement programs—consolidated
    - Match flexibility
    - Eligibility for rangelands (non-prime soils)
    - Priority for ecologically significant lands

- **Tax Policy**
  - Income tax:
    - Permanent authorization of enhanced deduction for donated easements
What's in the House farm bill? (costs from 2014-2023)

- Food stamps and nutrition, $743.9 billion
- Crop insurance, $93 billion
- Commodity Programs, $40.1 billion
- Conservation, $56.7 billion
- Everything else, $5.8 billion
Across the great divide...
Urban Influence

- State Legislature
  - Speaker of Assembly
  - Incoming Senate President Pro Tem
  - both from Los Angeles

- California House Delegation: 53 Members
  - Just 10 districts cover almost all of the Rangeland Coalition “focus area”
  - 31 of them lie south of the Tehachapi Range
Urban Influence

- Ranchers in Congress
  - 535 Total House and Senate

- 112th Congress:
  - 17 Farmers, 11 Ranchers

- 113th Congress:
  - 29 “farmers, ranchers, or cattle farm owners”
Most Frequently Listed Occupational Categories by Members, 113th Congress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Representatives</th>
<th>Senators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service/Politics</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outlook for 2014

- “If it doesn’t rain, nothing else matters…”
- Rep. John Garamendi
U.S. Drought Monitor

January 7, 2014
(Released Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Impact Types:

~ Delineates dominant impacts
S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g., agriculture, grasslands)
L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g., hydrology, ecology)

Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/
Potential Future Federal Priorities

- **Conservation Tax Incentives**
  - Income Tax
  - Capital Gains Tax
  - Estate Tax
    - "Wedding Cake"

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund**
  - Third Party Easements

- **Mitigation**
  - Use of working lands easements

- **Next Farm Bill**
  - More funding for rangeland easements
Potential Future State Priorities

- Conservation Tax Credit
  - Transferable

- Williamson Act

- Watershed protection
  - Role of working lands

- Mitigation
  - Use of easements

- Climate Change
  - Adaptation--wildlife connectivity
  - Rangeland conservation and GHG benefits
**Water Bond Proposal comparison 1/13/14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>AB 848 (Wolk) As Introduced January 9, 2014</th>
<th>AB 1331 Rendon As Amended January 7, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality &amp; Safe Drinking Water</td>
<td>$900 MILLION</td>
<td>$1 BILLION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Water Security</td>
<td>$1.5 BILLION</td>
<td>$1.5 BILLION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>$1 BILLION</td>
<td>$1.5 BILLION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>$1 BILLION</td>
<td>$1 BILLION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watershed Protection</td>
<td>$1.1 BILLION</td>
<td>$1.5 BILLION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Protection</td>
<td>$975 MILLION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>$6.475 BILLION</td>
<td>$6.5 BILLION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Important decisions will be made—with or without us

Some of them can have a big impact on ranchers and rangelands

We should probably try to influence them

We’ll be more effective if we work together