

Member Focused; Results Driven

Mark your Calendars 2012 February, March, April & May Meetings and Annual Events

May 16, 2012 Board of Directors Meeting

May 23, 2012 Legislative Committee Meeting

May 28, 2012 Office Closed Memorial Day

June 13, 2012 Executive Committee Meeting

June 17-19, 2012 NASFT Summer Fancy Food Show Washington, DC

June 21 - 24, 2012 RIFDA Convention

June 27, 2012 Legislative Committee Meeting

July 4, 2012 Office is closed

July 11, 2012 Legislative Committee Meeting

July 25, Executive Committee Meeting @ 7:30am

August 9, 2012 RIFDA PAC Event

Mon. Aug. 13th Victory Day Holiday - Office Closed

Wed. Aug. 22nd Board of Directors 3rd Quarter Meeting

Thurs. Aug. 23rd WIC Meeting @ 9:30

September 10, 2012 RIFDA Charity Golf Event

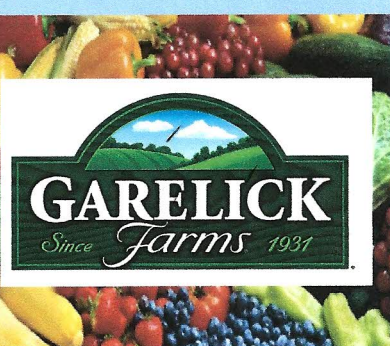
September 12, 2012 Sen. Reed Trip to Washington

December 1, 2012 Annual Meeting & Holiday Gala

March 7, 2013 RIFDA Annual Trade Day

Thank you

May Supplier of the Month



RHODE ISLAND FOOD DEALERS ASSOCIATION

* May 2012 -AUGUST 2012 MEETINGS & ANNUAL EVENTS *
* RHODE ISLAND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE * SIAL CANADA*

RI Legislative Update

With the end of the bill submission period for most legislators (only leadership can introduce at this point) events have recently been taking a more active turn on the bills that we have been following. Although the General Assembly still faces the task of balancing the budget and preparing alternates for legislative support (which is certainly going on behind the scenes in a much less public profile) the majority of bills has now been introduced and has progressed along the legislative path.

As most political observers agree, due to less than overwhelming support of the budget proposed by the governor's office the actual budget will undergo many modifications before it proceeds out of the House Finance Committee. This process needs to be monitored closely as leadership could use other means to gain funding (or make different cuts in expenditures) in order to meet the budget criteria. Additionally, as we have seen previously, this budget situation also provides opportunities for legislation that would otherwise die in committee to be fast tracked at the end - both to accommodate budget needs or in the spirit of compromise to gain votes needed in both Houses.

In recent weeks we have testified at hearings for the minimum wage bills (H7396 and S2374) - the latest meeting in front of Senate Labor on April 14th. Although we were in the minority of those testifying against the bill (both in establishing a new minimum base and in opposition to the COLA adjustments outlined in subsequent years) we were able to present the point that our industry has specific unique characteristics including a significant part time to full time ratio and base step increases that put us in an unenviable position and financial disadvantage should this bill pass as written. Further, although the industry pays above average wages overall - it also provides a number of benefits to part and full-time employees that most industry's do not. This needs to be taken into consideration with any legislation considered.

We have strong support with members of these committees and we are fairly confident that if this moves forward it will be modified to be fair and equitable. In both the Senate and House versions of this bill the outcomes of the hearings was to "hold the bills for further study". This by no means signifies that these are dead as they could be fast tracked near the end of the session in order to get comprises on other legislation or as noted above to move the budget through to the necessary majority to support the latest version of the budget.

On April 10th we also testified in front of House Finance Committee which had a hearing on H 7342 - the Beverage Tax. In conjunction with the Coalition of associations and Chambers we presented a well-organized and meaningful argument as to why this bill should not be considered. Thanks to a number of our RIFDA members who presented letters of opposition we were able to show a strong network of businesses who would be hurt by this bill. We also went to lengths to show the negative impact and perception to consumers. Those consumers are also constituents of the legislators and in an election year it is effective to point out to them that the voters would not be happy with them for imposing an additional tax and for increasing their already increasing food bill.

Although this Beverage Tax bill has been refined and is reintroduced each of the past three years and has strong support from the American Heart Association, the Diabetes Association, the RI Department of Health (and a number of other groups) it would seem highly unlikely - but certainly possible - that this would go forward as written. Most legislators we have talked to would not support it if it got out of committee. Most view this as an excessive tax on consumers and recognize that the industry has introduced a number of new items over the past few years - so consumer have choices and should be allowed to make them. This bill is "Held for Further Study" the bill has not been scheduled a hearing or for their companion bill. The coalition will continue to speak out against this bill and take whatever actions it needs to if this shows any chance of moving forward.



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BACK TO MONTREAL
MAY 9, 10 & 11, 2012

Canada's Leading International Food Trade Show

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Member Focused; Results Driven

Thank you

April Retailer of the Month



HELPFUL INDUSTRY LINKS

FMI National Legislative Updates

<http://www.fmi.org/gr/>

RI Legislative Info

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/genmenu/>

RI Pending Bills and Calendar

<http://dirac.rilin.state.ri.us/billstatus/webclass1.asp>

RI News and Press Releases
From the House and Senate

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/news/>

Don't miss out! Tickets are already selling!

Please Join Senator Jack Reed and Members of the Rhode Island Business Community For

Rhode Island Business Day 2012 in Washington, DC

Wednesday, September 12, 2012



National Legislative Update

*** 2012 Convention Save the Date* Helpful Links * Join Senator Jack Reed & Members of the Rhode Island Business Community***

SNAP Program Possible Impact of Budget Cuts:

As previously reported by FMI, the House-passed budget directs six House Committees to find deficit reductions within their respective jurisdictions. The House Agriculture Committee, which authorizes programs such as SNAP, is tasked with reporting \$33.2 billion in savings by April 27. Over the past few weeks various food industry representatives have met with a number of House and Senate members' offices and Agriculture Committee staffers to discuss how changes in the administration of the SNAP program could affect the grocery industry. The committee is expected to begin releasing proposals in the near future next week.

A good contact for all federal SNAP issues at FMI is Hannah Walker (hwalker@fmi.org).

USDA Report on the Important Role of SNAP:

Recently the USDA's Economic Research Service released a report highlighting the importance of SNAP in the fight against poverty in the United States. This full report is available for review on our website. Look for USADA Report, April 2012.

Latest USDA SNAP Stats

USDA released their latest monthly SNAP participation data, which is from December 2011. It shows that more than 46.5 million Americans participated in SNAP in December 2011. This is an increase of 2.4 million people, compared to December 2010, and 29.6 million more than July 2000, when the program participation nationally reached its lowest point in the prior decade. Increases in SNAP caseloads between December 2010 and December 2011 occurred in 45 states and the District of Columbia. The ten states that registered the largest over-the-year percentage caseload increases were: Iowa (13.7%); Delaware (12.2%); New Jersey (11.7%); Alaska (11.6%); Colorado (10.7%); Hawaii (10.7%); Minnesota (10.5%); Rhode Island (9.9%); California (9.4%); Connecticut (9.0%).

Menu Labeling Update- Seeking Bill Co-Sponsors; FDA Hearing Next Week:

We hope to soon have final language for legislation to clarify that the chain restaurant menu labeling regulations should not be expanded to include mainstream grocery stores and to provide flexibility for restaurant delivery operations where the majority of orders are placed by customers off-premises. Retailers interested in support these efforts can sign on to letter of support avialb eon FMI's website. Interested Congressional offices should contact Casey Hogan with Rep. John Carter casey.hogan@mail.house.gov, (202) 225-3864.

FDA Commissioner

Margaret Hamburg is scheduled to testify shortly before the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, which provides annual funding to FDA. We will provide additional information to you as it becomes available.

L.A. Superior Court Says 10-cent charge for Paper Bags is not a Tax

In the continuing issue regarding plastic bag use – a unique situation has developed in California. The Los Angeles County Superior Court denied a lawsuit by plastic bag manufacturers to block implementation of the County's grocery bag reduction ordinance. According to the California Grocers Association (CGA), the Court determined that the 10-cent mandated charge for paper grocery bags included in the County's bag ordinance was not a tax and therefore the County had not violated requirements for voter approval of the ordinance. Retailers in the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County have been prohibited from bagging groceries with single-use plastic grocery bags since July of last year. In addition, the County ordinance requires stores to charge consumers the average cost of providing paper bags, which the county set at ten cents.

Save the Date!
2012 RIFDA Convention
why: water - wonderful - worldclass
when: June 21 - June 24, 2012
where: Ocean Edge Resort & Golf Course Brewster, MA
Warm summer fun with RIFDA

