



Agricultural Promotion Board Structure Policy Development 2014

Issue:

In the 2014 legislative session, both the Tennessee Dairy Promotion Committee and Tennessee Soybean Promotion Board were extended until 2015. In an effort to synchronize with sunsets of other agricultural promotion boards, both government operations committees chose to extend the boards by only one year as opposed to the traditional multiyear.

The dairy and soybean boards will join the beef, pork and egg promotion boards next year for extension, presumably through 2021. Aside from some technical corrections to the language of the bill which extended the Soybean Promotion Board, committee structures and processes remained largely unchanged. It is possible, but not likely, efforts to amend the board member selection process will resurface with the sunset hearings.

Questions:

Should any organization have the ability to submit nominees to the Commissioner of Agriculture to serve on commodity promotion boards?

Should the Commissioner of Agriculture choose exclusively from nominees submitted by Farm Bureau and other industry specific groups?

Background:

Since the late 1970s, Tennessee agricultural promotion boards have been promoting their products using funds generated by a self-assessed check-off program. These boards and committees have been renewed every six years by the General Assembly and have been guided by its oversight. Generally, these boards were designed to meet five objectives which include: research, advertisement, promotion, education and market development of each respective commodity. These check-off programs have been partially responsible for the popular and recognizable advertising campaigns such as "*Beef, It's What's for Dinner,*" "*got milk*" and "*Pork, the Other White Meat*" - to name a few.

In recent years, there has been a movement to change the way all state boards and commissions are nominated and selected. The intent is to reduce influence of outside groups on state boards by providing more flexibility to select the members. On these promotion boards, Farm Bureau nominates members and the Commissioner of Agriculture selects one of the nominations. There is some consideration to allow, but not require the Commissioner to select from these nominees. This would dissent from what was voted on by producers in each respective referendum.

Farm Bureau Policy:

Farm Bureau policy includes seven provisions which promotion programs should contain. The nomination process is not included.