



Third Quarter Advocacy Update

By Jayson Welter, *General Counsel, UnitedAg*



In May, UnitedAg organized a legislative conference for our WomenAg Alumni as well as our Directors, Trustees and staff. All attendees were excited to represent UnitedAg and their employers in Sacramento and speak to legislators about bills that were approaching the house of origin deadline in just a few weeks. Twenty-one attendees representing fifteen different employers attended the conference and met with over 25 legislators and staff as well as the governor's office and also met with the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Karen Ross.



UnitedAg delegates pictured with Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Below is a summary of the bills we discussed with legislators:

SB 306 (Becker) Health Care Prior Authorizations: Oppose

This bill would prohibit prior authorization for services if within the prior calendar year, the plan approved 90% or more of requested authorizations. The bill assumes that prior authorization is a negative practice that slows, limits or prevents care from occurring. Rather, prior authorization is a valuable tool that health plans can use to identify patients that need case management, care coordination, support services or other higher-level services to ensure they receive best care possible for their condition. Without using prior authorization to alert health plans to these conditions, health plans may not be aware until a provider submits a claim which could delay these support services for months.

AB 1264 (Gabriel) Ultra-processed food: Oppose, unless amended

This bill defines "ultra-processed food" in state law. Directs the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to identify and regulate "particularly harmful ultra-processed food" by July 1, 2026. Schools must begin phasing out these foods by 2028. The bill definition includes emulsifiers, thickeners, flavoring agents, flavor enhancers, color adjuncts, surface-active agents, non-nutritive sweeteners and more. As written, many ingredients are captured within the definition, such as beeswax, beet juice, citric acid, and cornstarch which are used in processing or protecting of many fresh fruits and vegetables.

AB 1331 (Elhawary) Workplace Surveillance: Oppose

Regulates workplace surveillance technology but does so with broad language that effectively bans most forms of monitoring, even those essential for workplace safety and compliance.

Continues on Page 2

SB 72 (Caballero) Water Supply Target: Support

Requires the Department of Water Resources to set a water supply planning target of 9 million-acre-feet by 2040 in the California Water Plan and to develop a 2050 target to support all beneficial water uses.

SB 601 (Allen) Water; Waste Discharge: Oppose

SB 601 proposes to expand water discharge permitting in California, but it goes far beyond federal protections and creates significant regulatory, legal, and economic burdens. It also adds new water quality permit requirements for dischargers, creates a new category of waters under the highly litigated term “nexus waters,” increases penalties, removes economic considerations and contains a private right of action.

After the legislative meetings, UnitedAg held a legislative reception for the legislators and their staff to join us to socialize and continue the conversations from earlier in the day. Over 20 legislators and staff attended the reception. It was a proud day for UnitedAg to represent health care and agriculture by influencing and educating legislators in Sacramento.



UnitedAg delegates pictured with California Senator Shannon Grove (R-12) at the Annual Legislative Reception.



Left to right: Griselda Jauregui, Henderson Farms; Emily Rooney and Tricia Geringer, Agricultural Council of California; and Kiran Sibia, Summit Almonds.



Left to right: Tina Jones, Trilogy Personnel & Land Management; California Assemblymember Juan Alanis (R-22); and Jayson Welter, UnitedAg.



Left to right: Samantha C. Taylor, Hope Family Wines; California Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez (R-36); Bridget Sanchez, UnitedAg; and Lennet Giron, Trilogy Personnel & Land Management.



Left to right: Jayson Welter, UnitedAg; California Assemblymember Greg Wallis (R-47); Tina Jones, Trilogy Personnel & Land Management; and Hoda Afshari, UnitedAg.



Left to right: Samantha C. Taylor, Hope Family Wines; Bridget Sanchez, UnitedAg; California Senator Roger Niello (R-06); Lennet Giron, Trilogy Personnel & Land Management; and a member of the Assemblymember's staff.