

## Nov. 9, 2012 - SUFC Policy Working Group Call:

### Post Election Discussion and Analysis:

- Top line takeaway after the election there is still the essentially the same House and Senate and Administration balance (despite all efforts/\$)
- Fiscal cliff: There may be an agreement to push back the January cliff date. Worse-case scenario is early 2013 the mandatory spending reductions will go into place. (8.2% sequestration/cuts go into effect post "cliff.")
- There was a shuffle in Congress with the election but most Committee Chairs (of direct interest to SUFC) are staying in place (i.e., Senator Stabenow).
- There is a lot of activity now through the end of 2012 focusing on leadership elections – heavy internal administrative work/details so little time on the calendar for hefty decision/work until after December.
- There is an uptick in the global warming/climate adaption discussion on the Hill. Emergency relief funds will impact this discussion – but there is such a packed agenda through the end of 2012 (and holidays) that not much is expected
- Anything related to "adaptation" will be at the Administration's initiative (continuing from the first four years) but not much out of Congress. At best, carbon tax will be addressed.
- Adaptation may not be something SUFC politically advances but may be included in SUFC education/policy platform as we develop ideas about leading issues: Energy conservation/reduction will resonate.

### Farm Bill:

- Significant differences remain within both parties and a 1 year extension of the current Farm Bill (FB) is being debated.
- House Ranking Member Peterson (Ag Committee) is still pushing for a 5 yr. vs. 1 year.
- There is a good argument for a five-year FB b/c we are dealing with a fiscal situation under Ag Committee jurisdiction – which provides some protection.
- ACTION RECOMMENDED FOR SUFC re: FARM BILL: Time to thank and encourage a five-year Farm Bill/resolution – no more. Continue in "monitor mode."

### Appropriations Bill:

- There MIGHT be some time and attention on the Appropriations bill but the feeling is our funds (U&CF) not likely to be reduced (outside cliff scenario).

Information passed along by Phil Rodbell:

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/11/07/a-to-do-list-for-president-obamas-next-four-years/obama-needs-green-goals-without-rancor>

### **Commentary: Obama Needs Green Goals Without Rancor**

( by Carol Browner) Energy and climate change, two issues that deeply divide the country, stand out as major pieces of unfinished business for the Obama administration. Sadly, it is not clear how many disasters it will take and how many billions we will have to spend before we take the potential consequences of climate change

seriously. But as the president has said, even for those who don't believe climate change is real, the benefits of clean energy -- cleaner air, energy independence, American jobs and enhanced global competitiveness -- are just too important to ignore. The good news is the president can continue to make real progress toward a clean energy future by using his executive authority and leveraging existing energy laws. In his first term, Obama, using an energy bill signed by George W. Bush, worked with governors, car industry executives, labor and environmentalists, to reach an agreement on cleaner, more fuel efficient cars. Manufacturers got the business certainty and regulatory flexibility they needed, consumers won savings at the pump and the air we all breathe got a little cleaner. The Clean Air Act of 1990 mandated technology based standards to reduce dangerous emissions of air toxics. Under that authority, the president has already set limits on mercury pollution that will save 11,000 lives and prevent 130,000 asthma attacks annually while spurring clean energy innovation that will modernize and streamline outdated and inefficient power plants. The Supreme Court has affirmed the E.P.A.'s authority to limit greenhouse gases that endanger public health. As he did with the car companies, the president should use the existing authority to work with the electric utilities and power plants to craft a sector plan to reduce carbon pollution and secure greater energy efficiency while providing business certainty.

#### **Nov. 30, 2012 -- SUFC Policy Working Group Call:**

- SUFC will look at late February through mid-March for the Annual meeting and advocacy Day. Early draft calendar are JUST out (attached).
- Look for scheduling request via Doodle for date availability for 2-day window. The earlier date the better to influence process but the debt ceiling/sequestration issue will continue to monopolize time and attention on the Hill.
- Suggestion to explore outreach and education activities with National Academy of Sciences – NAS - (Feb. 25-26) re: urban forestry and ecosystem research. Potential to host briefing on the Hill IF there is enough interest and capacity among WG members to move this suggestion forward.
- Jennifer will follow up with NAS to discuss any potential interest they have in dovetailing an event for both speakers/experts AND workshop participants in DC for the event. While it is not likely the SUFC Advocacy Day and Annual Meeting could be held that early – there may be an opportunity to host two events – parallel paths.
- The interest/hook for a briefing is the economic benefits of ecosystem services. WG members will reflect and discuss later in December.
- The Continental Dialogue (CD) is setting up a separate entity to support their advocacy work (since they are almost exclusively funded by USDA). Faith expressed interest in having SUFC leadership be a part of their steering committee (least one UF representative).
- CD issues of interest include: APHIS, Appropriations, programs dealing w/ pest issues, rulemakings etc. <http://www.continentalforestdialogue.org/>

**NEXT Policy Call will be Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM to discuss Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> meeting preparation with Jim Reaves – Research, FS. All welcome, but Danielle, Gerry, Carrie and Jennifer will attend on behalf of SUFC membership.**