HOUSE FAILS TO PASS FARM BILL
As a shocking surprise to House Leadership on Thursday, the final vote on passage of the five year farm bill (H.R. 1947), which had been debated through the week, failed by 39 votes.

The 195 yes votes break down to 171 Republicans and 24 Democrats while 62 Republicans and 172 Democrats voted against passage of the bill that would have provided $939 billion over the next ten years to subsidize farmers, nutrition and rural energy programs. The proposed $20.5 billion cut to the food stamp program and other amendments to modify the program are considered to be the determining factors in failure of the bill passage.

Both parties believe that it is likely that a farm bill will be up again soon for consideration. Not acting would mean the continuation of a five billion dollar a year direct payments program in which the government pays farmers regardless of how much they make in a given year, and many in the House want to end or modify the direct payments program. The Senate has already passed its farm bill version by a bipartisan vote of 66 – 27. Included in the Senate-passed version was harmful language which could preclude convenience stores from accepting food stamps. PMAA will work with lawmakers to strike this language if the House can muster the votes to pass a farm bill that can be sent to conference committee.

PMAA monitored amendments during the House farm bill debate including an amendment by Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR) which would increase threshold sizes for Aboveground Storage Tank (AST) regulation at the farm level, and allow more farms to self-certify. It provides an exemption from the SPCC rule to any farmer who has less than 42,000 total gallons of oil storage capacity and no single tank larger than 10,000 gallons. The amendment was approved by voice vote. The Senate farm bill doesn’t include a farmer SPCC exemption, however, the Senate-passed Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) does include an SPCC exemption, but at lower levels.

Click here (http://pmaa.org/weeklyreview/SPCCSenateWRDA.pdf) to review the Senate SPCC exemption in the WRDA bill.

SENATE DEMOCRAT BACKS EMPLOYER MANDATE CHANGE TO OBAMACARE
Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN) became the first Senate Democrat to cosponsor legislation which would make changes to the “The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act,” commonly known as Obamacare. “The Forty Hours is Full Time Act of 2013” (S. 701) introduced in April by Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) would make changes to the healthcare employer mandate – legislation Senator Donnelly now supports. In 2014, companies with more than 50 employees will have to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in penalties if health insurance is not provided to all full time (30 hours per week) employees. S. 701 would apply only to workers clocking 40 hours a week or more. Senator Donnelly argues that employers are now shedding workers’ schedules to shield themselves from the healthcare mandate because businesses can’t afford it. Furthermore, Sen. Donnelly is asking President Obama to delay implementation of the healthcare employer mandate to give businesses time to adjust to the sweeping healthcare overhaul.

PMAA continues to urge the 113th Congress to revise or delay imposition of the costly employer mandates. Earlier this year, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduced the “American Job Protection Act” (S. 399) to eliminate the employer mandate. Companion legislation (H.R. 903) was introduced in the House by Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA).

JOIN PMAA IN ATLANTA THIS OCTOBER
PMAA will hold its Fall Meeting on October 11-12 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Please view current information at http://www.pmaa.org/pmaameetings/upcomingmeetings.asp.

2014 WESTERN PETROLEUM MARKETERS CONVENTION & CONVENIENCE STORE EXPO LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
Start planning now to attend the 2014 WPMA Convention and Convenience Store Expo. It will be held at the Mirage in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mark your calendars for February 18-20, 2014.

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