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Winter Season is Coming!

The fall is just beginning and it is becoming clear what issues we need to work on for the upcoming 2014 Legislative Session.

Transportation:

Washington State is still unfunded for many of its needed transportation projects, and that is causing stimulation in the Legislature to get funded and soon. While the 2013 session concluded without a revenue package, it is not an issue that has gone away. In fact, it's been simmering all throughout the summer and we have been prepped that a "special session" could be called prior to the 2014 Legislative session to address a funding package. While one has not been called yet, meetings throughout the State have been organized for Washingtonians to gather and discuss the funding holes. Most quickly look to the gas tax as the funding source – with looming 10 to 12 cent gas tax increases on the horizon. Our industry clearly disagrees, citing unfair border price disparities, harsh negative effect on the cost of goods for consumers, unmonitored failures on behalf of the Department of Transportation projects, and a waste of taxpayer's funds to this point.

But WOMA is fighting an uphill battle. Just about every other organized trade association, including the Association of Washington Business, is working to move forward with a transportation package that includes a gas tax increase. Funding transportation equals jobs in our state, and it's difficult to argue with the benefits of a stronger economy. We just prefer it not be lifted through a tax on petroleum products.

Low Carbon Fuel Standards:

It has become part of the Governor's intentions to bring forward a low carbon fuel standard package in next year's legislative session. While one has not been publically released, we know it is on the horizon. David Ducharme and Lea Wilson are meeting in November and December with industry allies and members of CIOMA and OPA to strategize a plan to protect our members in 2014 from LCFS.

PLIA:

Since Russ Olsen has taken over PLIA, many wonderful changes are underway. He is making progress towards autonomy from Ecology as well as funding and authority efforts to make our sites cleaner quicker and with great help from our insurance agencies. More to come on that front!

Cash vs. Credit Signage Issues:

The Department of Agriculture has reached out to our industry to alert us to many non-compliant signs as it relates to Conditional Pricing. In Washington, if you place a condition – such as Cash v. Credit – on the sign, then the condition must be a minimum of ½ the height of the price listed on the sign. It is a provision in place to protect consumers from a bait and switch scenario and has been on the books since the mid 80's. AGR has identified many stations on the West side that are not in compliance and they are starting to issue warnings. In an effort to communicate with the industry, they will be mailing out letters to station owners letting them know this rule will be enforced in the coming months. WOMA is collecting data now on the cost impact of this enforcement, and working with AGR to mitigate those impacts.

Liens on Products:

WOMA is also investigating a way to introduce legislation that would impose a lien on fuels purchased from marketers for large projects/commercial sites so they can be assured of payment. Washington will mimic the Wyoming law, or simply alter current statutes in place to try and get this on the books - hopefully one thing we can do pro-actively to cover our resources.

The 2014 is a short session, so it will come fast and quick. We know that transportation will be the top focus, and hope other good work can get done as well.

Holiday Party:

WOMA's Holiday Party was held at the **Emerald Downs Race Track** in Auburn, WA on December 10th. It was a super time, with mock-racing occurring after dinner, where we named our own ponies and bet just like we do at the track. For highlights of the event go to www.wpma.com/washington/! We look forward to seeing you at the WOMA Convention in June.