

CAPITOL BRACES FOR PROTESTS

As many as 8,000 protestors may descend upon Sacramento next week to demonstrate against an international agriculture conference. Capitol security officers claim that the demonstrations, which have nothing to do with California's Legislature, should not disrupt business inside the building. Nonetheless, precautions are being taken and access to the Capitol will be closely monitored.

The protests relate to a U.S. Department of Agriculture's first annual Ministerial Conference and Expo on Agricultural Science and Technology, which has become a lightning rod for foes of genetically modified foods.

NO ACTION ON BUDGET – CAR TAX “TRIGGER” PULLED

As expected, last Sunday's (June 15) Constitutional deadline for the Legislature to submit a budget bill to the Governor passed without fanfare – or budget. Nor did the week provide hopeful signs.

On Tuesday it was reported that a bipartisan group of lawmakers which had committed to producing a compromise budget plan had collapsed in the face of opposition from both their party colleagues. The compromise plan was released, but it was signed by only two of the original 18 members – Democratic Assembly Member [Joe Canciamilla](#) of Pittsburg and Republican [Keith Richman](#) of Northridge.

On Friday, the long-anticipated tripling of the state's vehicle license fee took place, as state Director of Finance Steve Peace sent a letter to the DMV stating that the state had insufficient funds to continue the rate roll-back enacted three years ago. The action is expected to increase state revenues by \$4 billion over the coming fiscal year. Republicans and taxpayer groups immediately announced plans to challenge the legality of Peace's action in court and also to place the issue before the voters via initiative.

DAVIS RECALL FOR REAL

Three weeks ago the Scene had an article on the "Davis Recall Getting Serious." At that time various political "insiders" were split on the chances of the recall petition qualifying for a vote of the people of California. Today, the consensus of some insiders and many newspaper columnists is that the recall petition will qualify. The only remaining question centers on when the recall election will take place – October or November 2003, or March 2004. If

enough registered voters' signatures (almost 900,000) are certified by late July, the election will held in October or November.

This week five statewide Democratic office holders – Treasurer Phil Angelides, Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamante, Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, Attorney General Bill Lockyer, and Controller Steve Westly – announced that they do not intend to run for governor if there is a recall election. U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein has not ruled out running for governor on a recall ballot. If Feinstein runs for governor, she is considered to be the Democrat who would win if the recall election forces Governor Davis out of office

On the Republican side, U.S. Congressman Darrell Issa (San Diego) has reportedly given \$795,000 to the organizers of the recall campaign. Issa is very interested in being governor and he has recommended that Republicans rally around one Republican candidate. At this time the "anointed" candidate could be one of the following individuals: Issa, state Senator Tom McClintock (Thousand Oaks), former Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan, actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Bill Simon (who lost to Davis last year). Riordan has announced that he endorses Schwarzenegger for governor. If the "Terminator" decides not to run, then Riordan may run as a nonpartisan candidate.

“EXTREME LOBBYING” IN HEADLINES AGAIN

Fuel was added to the newly-fired legislative effort to crack down on overly-aggressive lobbying this week when a consumer group published partial social security numbers of the members of a legislative committee who voted against or abstained on a major privacy bill on the internet.

The nonprofit Foundation for Consumer & Taxpayer Rights said that it had purchased the social security numbers on the internet for \$26, and was only demonstrating the need for the kind of increased privacy protections that would have been provided by [SB 1](#) by Senator [Jackie Speier](#) (D-San Francisco). The measure earlier had passed the Senate, but failed passage in a Monday hearing of the Assembly Banking & Finance Committee when nine of the committee's 12 members either voted against or abstained on the bill.

One committee member wrote a letter to Assm. Speaker [Herb Wesson](#) (D-Los Angeles), saying that the practice "bordered on extortion."