

Opposition to bill that would make well logs public

By Tim Hearden, Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — Farm groups are lining up against a bill in the California Legislature that would make landowners' well logs available to the public.

Since 1949, the state has required notification from well drillers whenever a well is created, deepened, reperforated or destroyed. The well completion reports include details about the well's depth, the type of soils encountered at each elevation and depth to water, according to a state Assembly bill analysis.

Until now, the information provided to the state Department of Water Resources has not been readily accessible to the public. State Sen. Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills, wants to change that, reasoning that the geophysical data is important to groundwater managers, consulting hydrologists and others.

But the California Farm Bureau Federation, the California Cattlemen's Association and other farm groups oppose the bill, calling it unnecessary and worrying it could jeopardize the safety of drinking water.

"Number one, the information is available to the people it needs to be available to," said Justin Oldfield, the CCA's director of government relations. "From a public perspective, there's a lot of concern about putting this information out there about what wells are pumping water and how much they're pumping."

"This wouldn't help anything," he said. "It wouldn't solve a problem. It's creating a solution for a problem that doesn't exist."

The bill passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee, 11-6, on Aug. 18 and was sent to the Assembly floor. It passed the Senate, 25-14, on June 2.

Read the whole story