



2017 Newsletter - Issue #1

Keeping you informed about legislative issues that affect your business and your industry.

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2017 GIC EVENTS:

(check the GIC website for TBD details)

March Board Meeting

NCSU University Club - Raleigh

Thanks to Dr. Tom Monaco for hosting.

May 2017

Legislative Day

Legislative Building - Raleigh

June 22, 2017

7th Annual Water Symposium

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

McKimmon Center - Raleigh

September Board Meeting

NC Farm Bureau Office - Raleigh

Thanks to NCFB for hosting.

December Board Meeting

Koury Convention Center
Greensboro, NC

Thanks to NCFB for hosting during the 2017 NCFB Annual Meeting.

GIC PAC Fundraisers

Dates and Details TBD.

GIC ANNUAL MEETING LAYS GROUNDWORK FOR A BUSY 2017

More than 50 members attended the 2017 GIC Annual Meeting to hear speakers from Washington D.C., honor friends, and pass the torch to the next board leaders. **The overwhelming message was: “your involvement is key.”**

“GIC does not have the biggest PAC fund, but your relationships with your legislators have given the green industry a place at the table,” said GIC Lobbyist Dick Carlton. “We can’t rest on our laurels. Get to know your legislators, especially the new ones.”

GIC urges all members to *be proactive now*, to make it easy to go to legislators later when your business needs them. Take these three easy steps:

1. Find your legislators. www.ncleg.net/representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx
2. Go to their in-district offices and introduce yourself as a GIC member and a contact for green industry issues.
3. Let GIC know: 919.372.1586 or ckirven@ncgreenindustryCouncil.com.

State Legislative News

The 2016 election did not change the NC political landscape too much – the Supreme Court put a stay on redistricting, and while there is a new democrat governor, the republican leadership remains vetoproof. Dick Carlton reviewed potential issues GIC will be watching over the 2017 long session:

Taxes: The green industry fared well through last year’s tax on services storm compared to other trade industries thanks to GIC’s efforts. Dick hopes leadership will take a respite on the issue this year.

Boards and Commissions: GIC needs to be on the lookout for efficiency work;

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i.e. combining boards.

Programs: A healthier state budget may provide an opportunity to create new programs and policies to help the green industry.

2017 GIC Legislative Priorities: The GIC legislative team will keep a vigilant watch for any bills that could affect the green industry – water, labor, immigration, and natural disaster relief especially – and will once again call on members when in need.

Federal Legislative News

GIC welcomed two speakers from Washington D.C.: Towers Mingledorf, Legislative Assistant to Senator Thom Tillis, and Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort Senior Vice President of Industry Advocacy and Research.

Towers Mingledorf spoke to Senator Tillis’ love for NC’s ag industry. Tillis is willing to risk political capital – and people know it – on labor and immigration; topics not popular with his party. He chose to work on United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, instead of Agriculture, because he believes progress can be made via that committee. When asked about progression of immigration/H2B talks with President Trump, Towers reported all congressional offices have delivered white papers on top issues per the new administration’s request. They are now waiting to see who their contacts will be once the

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President is sworn in and the new staff is dispersed.

Towers urged all members to contact Sen. Tillis' office if they need assistance.

Keynote Speaker Craig Regelbrugge opened his remarks reminding GIC members that with politics, like the weather, things are going to change. He concurred that Sen. Tillis is a valuable ally, and ran through a wealth of green industry issues his team is watching:

Agriculture Secretary: There has been no appointment yet, but since rural America put Trump in office, he remains hopeful for a solid pick (*since the meeting, President Trump named former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue*). There are a number of issues affecting the green industry – regulatory relief, overtime rules, a middle ground on salaries – that this position can address.

Labor: AmericanHort signed a broad business letter supporting Labor Secretary Andrew Puzder. The overall labor picture is complicated as the country waits to see the difference in the cam-

paign vs. the reality of governing. President Trump governing as a businessman is a positive scenario, but some of his advisors – Jeff Sessions and Kris Kobach – are the green industry's biggest adversaries. Craig warned we may have to live through some issues before we get to the good, and he's watching out for issues – including immigration, border debate, and H2B cap relief.

Taxes: There is optimism for tax reform, but sometimes confirmations turn toward taking out loopholes and deductions. Craig's team will be working hard to protect green businesses from things going negative.

Farm Bill: Work on the 2018 Farm Bill has already begun. It has become a first line for research and development funds. In addition, for weather disasters like Hurricane Matthew, the industry learns what is working and what is not, and it will work to figure out if the Farm Bill is a vehicle to fix broken funding.

Healthcare: Republicans are getting the message that they need a replacement if they repeal the Affordable Care Act.

"The green industry has faced eight of its hardest years," Craig sympathized. "It is a new day, and the new day can bring some opportunities. Your involvement is still key."

GIC President Sets 2017 Groundwork
The GIC presidential gavel was passed from Chris Mitchell (Ewing Irrigation) to Jonathan Richardson (Coastal Floratine, TCNC Past President). He closed the meeting promising to continue GIC's mission to Protect, Promote and Partner for the good of the green industry, and called on members to participate in 2017.

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got," he quoted. GIC can grow and strengthen its policy position in 2017, but it will take members expanding their capacity to volunteer their time and resources to make it happen.



GIC presented Craig Regelbrugge with the GIC Friend of the Green Industry Award for his 25 years of work fighting for green industry issues at the federal level.



Towers Mingledorf accepts the "GIC Legislator of the Year Award" for Senator Thom Tillis. "This is not another plaque to put on the wall," said award presenter and GIC Legislative Committee Member Buddy Murrow. "We've known Sen. Tillis since he was a junior legislator. He carried our cause throughout his career and we greatly appreciate his friendship. This is a statement of small businesses who respect someone who works so hard for them."

IN MEMORY

LAWRENCE "LARRY" BEWLEY
JAN. 10, 1942 - JAN. 12, 2017



Lawrence "Larry" Alden Bewley, 75, passed away peacefully surrounded by his wife and girls on January 12, 2017. Larry served as GIC's lead lobbyist until his retirement.

"Larry was a wonderful friend and colleague, who brought a spark to this organization in the beginning years," said Dick Carlton, GIC's current lobbyist. A moment of silence was observed at the annual meeting to remember this industry friend.

A celebration of his life was held on January 28 at Edenton Street United Methodist Church in Raleigh NC.

In lieu of flowers, donations would be appreciated for the Ruth Sheets Adult Day Care Center. Condolences may be shared at www.cremnc.com.