**May 16, 2021—Oklahoma Chapter legislative summary to date**

As our bill work at the Oklahoma Legislature winds down, we wanted to offer you an overview of where our bill work landed-- bills that were defeated and bills that passed.

We also wanted to share a couple interesting updates-- many of you are very aware of HB1674 (the bill that lets people run over protesters), and so we wanted to let you know that a formal legal challenge to this bill is being filed, and we will be looking for volunteers to help gather signatures for this effort in the near future. We will mail out much more information once it is available, but we are excited Oklahomans are stepping up to legally challenge this terrible bill.

One other action we would like to mention-- the Oklahoma legislature passed a bill to fund more than $4 BILLION in debt bailout to Oklahoma monopoly utilities as a result of the winter freeze event that left many Oklahomans without electricity-- you can read about it, and also take action, here: [http://sc.org/OKwinterrelief](http://sc.org/OKwinterrelief)

On to the bill summaries… First, the following bills all died, which is good news-- we lobbied against all of these bills during this session.

- HB1628 (would have eliminate ODAFF points violations)
- HB1833/ SB467 (would have eliminated “nuisance oil and gas lawsuits”)
- HB2850 (would have promoted “interstate water compacts”)
- SB389 (would have lowered gross production tax)
- SB749 (unfair new taxes on wind energy)
- SB996 (unfair rules on decommissioning wind turbines)
- HB2034 (no “oil haters” law, would have stymied renewable energy business growth)

Also, happily, all of the worst “anti-citizens-referendum (‘state questions’)” bills were killed.

One interesting note-- although 2 positive poultry bills did not make it out of their committees this session, they are still alive, and we will be able to work on them again first thing next session (2022):

- HB1918 (new setbacks for poultry operations)
- HB2719 (new poultry reporting requirements)
We do have some bad news to share, which we have summarized below—these are bills we opposed that were signed into law, and we share our reasons for opposing them here:

- **HB1093 (Rep. Kerbs and Sen. Murdock):** directs the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to allow for the development of watershed trading programs no later than Nov. 1, 2026. **We opposed this due to the fact that these programs are often used to allow major polluters to “trade their way out” of their pollution with no real change to their practices.**

- **HB1236 (Rep. McCall and Sen. Treat):** makes it a duty of the Attorney General to monitor and evaluate any action by the federal government; also creates within the Attorney General's Office a State Reserved Powers Protection Unit to monitor and evaluate any action by the federal government. **We opposed this because these duties are already a part of the AG’s job—this bill is an attempt to ALEC-ize Oklahoma’s state government.**

- **HB1674 (Rep. West and Sen. Standridge):** declares every person who knowingly obstructs the normal use of any public street, highway or road within the state will upon conviction be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for a term not exceeding 1 year or a fine of not less than $100 and not exceeding $5,000 or both. **We opposed this because this is a violation of Americans’ rights to protest.**

- **HB1815 (Rep. McBride and Sen. David):** requires the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to, no later than December 1, 2021, issue a report and recommendations to the Legislature regarding the ability and appropriateness of natural gas utilities to procure, transport and deliver renewable natural gas to customers. It requires the report to address a recommendation for the state’s renewable fuel standard or goal to more proactively promote biogas, renewable natural gas and hydrogen as solutions for reducing methane emissions and other environmental problems. **We opposed this because this bill falsely promotes methane-producing systems and claims they REDUCE methane. Also, they are not renewable systems, and therefore should not be added to Oklahoma’s “Renewable Portfolio Standards.”**

- **HB2095 (Rep. Lepak and Sen. Daniels):** modifies the definition of racketeering activity used in the Oklahoma Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) to include relating to unlawful assemblies. **We opposed this because this bill has been proven to be a violation of freedom of speech/ right to protest in other states. It is a harsh attempt to scare people away from protesting.**

- **SB448 (Sen. Taylor and Rep. Boles):** adds and modifies definitions within the Oklahoma Solid Waste Management Act to allow for chemical recycling and other processes like hydrolysis. **We opposed it because all forms of chemical recycling have been shown to be highly toxic and bad for the environment without actually reducing plastic waste. Also--we believe these processes should have MORE oversight, not less-- by qualifying them as “Solid Waste,” they will be less strictly monitored.**

- **SB0939 (Sen. Taylor and Rep. Pfeiffer):** provides any action conducted by critical infrastructure sectors will not constitute a nuisance when the applicable industry acts in compliance with or
acts consistently with government rules, guidelines or laws applicable to their sector. **We opposed this bill because it lets oil and gas companies off the hook for a whole range of legal issues, even though they have a long history of causing widespread damage to Oklahoma land/air/water.**

- **SB1021 (Sen. David and Rep. McBride):** creates the 10-member Hydrogen Production, Transportation and Infrastructure Task Force until Dec. 31, 2021. **We opposed this bill because we believe this taskforce is tilted to favor an oil and gas industry slant on “hydrogen”-- we want to see proof that this taskforce will objectively report on the science and economics, not simply be stacked with pro-fossil fuel participants.**

- **SB1022 (Sen. David and Rep Boles):** gives the executive director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board the power and duty to issue temporary permits and regular permits that have not been subject of a protest from an interested party.

- **SJR0023 (Sen. Standridge and Rep. Echols):** adds the State of Oklahoma to the list of U.S. states calling for a new Constitutional Convention. **We opposed this bill because there are no clear limits on what could happen if a Constitutional Convention is convened-- we strongly believe it would open a proverbial can of worms that could damage the very fabric of the United States Constitution.**

In closing, we did have a couple positive bill notes to share-- the following 2 bills we supported were signed into law:

- **SB770 (Sen. Stephens and Rep. Roberts):** extends the reauthorization date of the Wildlife Diversity tax check-off. **We supported this bill because it continues funding ODWC wildlife research work at no cost to Oklahoma taxpayers.**

- **HB2234 (Rep. Hilbert and Sen. Taylor):** creates the Driving on Road Infrastructure with Vehicles of Electricity (DRIVE) Act of 2021. **We supported this bill because it has various components that will help electric vehicles become more common in Oklahoma.**

Thank you for your efforts throughout this session, and we will continue reaching out to you with updates and actions throughout the rest of this session. We will also be sharing some news towards the end of session about ways you can stay involved between June and next January as we come up with new and positive ways to keep working for a better Oklahoma!