

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**February 1, 1999**

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LAST WEEK

SENATE TRIAL CONTINUES -- HOUSE ON RECESS - Last week, the Senate resumed the trial of impeachment of the President. On Thursday, the Senate rejected a motion to dismiss the trial. As a result, the Senate will begin taking depositions from witnesses in the case. Both the Senate Majority Leader and Minority Leader have expressed interest in concluding the trial by February 12, 1999. Throughout the course of last week, the House was on recess.

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS - Members of the thirteen Appropriations subcommittees responsible for performing primary drafting of agency funding bills were recently named. Of notable interest to agriculture was the movement of Jose Serrano (D-NY) to become the ranking Democrat on the Commerce, Justice, and State Subcommittee. The full roster of the Agriculture and Rural Development Subcommittee is as follows:

Republicans

Joe Skeen (NM), Chair
 James T. Walsh (NY)
 Jay Dickey (AR)
 Jack Kingston (GA)
 George Nethercutt (WA)
 Henry Bonilla (TX)
 Tom Latham (IA)
 Jo Ann Emerson (MO)

Democrats

Marcy Kaptur (OH)
 Rosa DeLauro (CT)
 Maurice Hinchey (NY)
 Sam Farr (CA)
 Allen Boyd (FL)

THIS WEEK

RELEASE OF PRESIDENT'S FY'2000 BUDGET - On Tuesday, February 2, 1999, the President is scheduled to present the administration's FY2000 budget proposal to Congress. Details of the budget are not public, however, provisions of a Lands Legacy Initiative announced both on January 12th and mentioned in the State of Union Address will be included. The initiative seeks to preserve valuable lands for public enjoyment and open space preservation including increased funding for farmland protection.

LOOKING AHEAD

WATERSHED HEARING - A hearing has been scheduled by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources (Chairman Sherwood Boehlert, R-NY) to discuss the Administration's FY2000 budget submission and programs under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction. Specifically, the Subcommittee has requested testimony regarding the NRCS small watershed program and also updates on the aging watershed infrastructure issue. Other likely witnesses at the hearing will include the Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

February 10, 1999 Time 2:00 PM Location TBA

FY'2000 BUDGET HEARINGS SCHEDULED - House and Senate Appropriations Committees have scheduled hearings on the Administration's FY'2000 Budget proposal relating to NRCS and Conservation programs. Key witnesses will include USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Jim Lyons; and NRCS Chief, Pearlie Reed. The meeting dates and times for the Appropriations hearings are as follows:

Senate

February 23, 1999 10:00am

House

February 24, 1999, 1:00pm

STATE OF CONSERVATION BRIEFING - A briefing previously scheduled for January 12th regarding the state of conservation activities on private land has been re-scheduled for March 9th. The briefing will be sponsored by the Senate Agriculture Committee and open to the public and media. NRCS staff will present information about the current state of NRCS program delivery-system and conservation assistance, and will also outline key priority issues for the agency for 1999.

March 9 10:00am 328-A Russell Bldg.