

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**June 14, 1999**

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LAST WEEK -

FISCAL YEAR 2000 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL PASSES HOUSE - On Tuesday evening, the House passed H.R. 1906, legislation making Fiscal Year 2000 appropriations for agriculture programs and agencies by a vote of 246-183. A long string of amendments by Rep. Tom Coburn (R-OK) ended after House Appropriations chair, C.W."Bill" Young (R-FL) passed an amendment which reduced agriculture department funding by \$102.5 million. Most of these reductions came from USDA buildings and facilities funds and funding for the Food and Drug Administration. The amendment was brokered by the House leadership as a way to squelch opposition by fiscal conservatives to discretionary spending above and beyond the balanced budget agreement of 1997. Funding levels for the Natural Resources Conservation Service were unchanged from the mark-up levels set at the Subcommittee level. They are as follows:

Conservation Operations.....	\$654,243,000
Watershed Surveys and Planning.....	\$10,368,000
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations.....	\$99,443,000
RC&D.....	\$35,265,000
Forestry Incentives Program (FIP).....	\$0
Farmland Protection Program.....	\$0
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).....	\$174,000,000

WETLANDS RESERVE REAUTHORIZATION LEGISLATION - On Tuesday, June 8, 1999, Representative Charles “Chip” Pickering of Mississippi introduced H.R. 2066, legislation that would amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to extend the authorization of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) until the year 2005. Specifically, the bill would authorize annual enrollment of 250,000 acres in the program. The legislation would also provide greater flexibility for utilizing third-party assistance in program implementation through cooperative agreements. The bill has been referred to the House Agriculture Committee.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE -

The following Bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced:

BILL	MEMBER	PURPOSE
S. 968	Graham, (FL)	Would authorize the Administrator of the Environment Protection Agency to make grants to state agencies with responsibility for water source development, for the purposes of maximizing the available water supply and protecting the environment through the development of alternative water sources.
H.R. 1909	Andrews, (NJ)	Would make supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 1999 to ensure the inclusion of commonly used pesticides in state source water assessment programs.
H.R. 1950	Farr, (CA)	Would amend the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 to extend authorization of the farmland protection program.
H.R. 1983	Clayton, (NC)	Would amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to improve the agricultural credit programs of the Department of Agriculture.
H.R. 2066	Chambliss, (GA)	Would amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the annual enrollment of land in the wetlands reserve program and to extend the program through 2005.

