

**WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**

**July 16, 2001**

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**LAST WEEK:**

**FY 2002 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL** - On Wednesday, July 11, 2001, the House of Representatives passed the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for FY 2002, H. R. 2330. The vote was 414 Yeas, 16 Nays, and two members did not vote.

A summary of reported funding for NRCS is as follows:

	<b>House Bill</b>	<b>Change from FY 2001</b>
Conservation Operations.....	782,762,000.....	+ 70,217,000 *
Watershed Surveys and Planning.....	11,030,000.....	+ 186,000
Watershed and Flood Prev. Ops.....	105,743,000.....	+ 6,519,000
Resource Cons. and Development.....	48,361,000.....	+ 6,438,000
EQIP.....	200,000,000.....	

*\* \$30.5 million is designated for implementation of the CRP and \$ 24.4 million is designated for pay cost increases.*

Two amendments were approved during floor debate on the bill that directly impact NRCS. The first was by Rep. Lucas (OK) to add \$5.4 million to the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program to rehabilitate aging watershed infrastructure. The second amendment was by Rep. Hinchey (NY) that prohibits eliminating positions related to the American Heritage Rivers Initiative.

**2001 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT** - The Senate passed the 2001 Supplemental Appropriations Act, H. R. 2216, and included an additional amount of

\$5 million for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations to repair damages to waterways and watersheds, resulting from natural disasters occurring in West Virginia on July 7 and July 8, 2001.

**SENATE AGRICULTURE HEARING** – The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee held a hearing on July 12, 2001 on the framework of the next farm bill. Witnesses represented various commodity groups such as corn, soybeans, and sorghum. Testimony focused on the importance of providing a safety net for farm producers. Many of the member’s questions related to the importance of land conservation programs. Witnesses agreed that a conservation was very important and should be part of a comprehensive strategy to boost farm income and sustain production.

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CONFIRMATIONS** - On Thursday, July 12, the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Harkin, IA) held a confirmation hearing on pending nominations of James R. Moseley to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Joseph J. Jen to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education and Economics. Members of the Committee asked nominees to provide feedback on a variety of issues. Dr. Jen spoke of agriculture education, food safety and enhancement of agricultural research. Mr. Moseley spoke of taking leadership to increase resources, and enhance GIS technology, soil quality and water quality. The nominees were reported out of Committee and were successfully confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Thursday evening.

**LEGISLATION OF NOTE**

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

<b>BILL</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
H. R. 1689	Schaffer, Colorado	To amend the Food Security Act of 1985, to establish a grassland reserve program to assist owners in restoring and conserving grassland.
H. R. 2480	Lucas, OK	A bill to reauthorize, improve, and expand conservation programs administered by the Department of Agriculture. Would fund EQIP at 1.2 billion per/year; set a 40 million acre cap for CRP; and create a 3 million acre grassland reserve.
S. 1111	Craig, Idaho	To amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to authorize the National Rural Development Partnership.
S. 1153	Craig, Idaho	To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish a grassland reserve program to assist owners in restoring and protecting grassland.

**SENATE COMMITTEE NEW ASSIGNMENTS** - Sen. Paul Wellstone, MN is now a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Sen. Jack Reed, RI, is now a member

of the Senate Appropriations Committee. These additions were made as a result of the Senate majority shift earlier this year.

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**THIS WEEK:**

**SENATE FARM BILL FULL COMMITTEE HEARING** - The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Harkin, IA) will hold hearings on the context and framework of a bill to reauthorize farm programs that must be completed by 2002. The agenda : cotton, wheat, rice, sugar and peanuts.

June 17                                      9:00 a.m.                                      328A Russell Building

**APPROPRIATIONS ACTIVITIES** – With only two weeks before the August Recess, Senate Appropriators will be striving to prepare bills for floor consideration, including the FY 2002 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. While a markup on this legislation is possible this week, Committee Members will also be preparing for a Conference on the FY 2001 Supplemental Appropriations Bill. Members appointed to the Conference Committee on the Supplemental are as follows:

<u>House Conferees</u>		<u>Senate Conferees</u>
Rep. Bill Young (FL)	Rep. Henry Bonilla (TX)	Sen. Robert Byrd (WV)
Rep. Ralph Regula (OH)	Rep. Joe Knollenberg (MI)	Sen. Daniel Inouye (HI)
Rep. Jerry Lewis (CA)	Rep. David Obey (WI)	Sen. Fritz Hollings (SC)
Rep. Harold Rogers (KY)	Rep. John Murtha (PA)	Sen. Ted Stevens (AK)
Rep. Joe Skeen (NM)	Rep. Norm Dicks (WA)	Sen. Thad Cochran (MS)
Rep. Frank Wolf (VA)	Rep. Martin Sabo (MN)	
Rep. Jim Kolbe (AZ)	Rep. Steny Hoyer (MD)	
Rep. Sonny Callahan (AL)	Rep. Alan Mollohan (WV)	
Rep. James Walsh (NY)	Rep. Marcy Kaptur (OH)	
Rep. Charles Taylor (NC)	Rep. Peter Visclosky (IN)	
Rep. David Hobson (OH)	Rep. Nita Lowey (NY)	
Rep. Ernest Istook (OK)	Rep. Jose Serrano (NY)	
Rep. John Olver (MA)		

**HOUSE FARM BILL FULL COMMITTEE HEARINGS** – The House Agriculture Committee (Chairman Combest, TX) will begin hearings on Farm Policy concept papers developed by the Committee. The concept papers lay out a broad spending plan on agricultural programs including substantial increases for conservation programs. The Committee’s goal is to conduct a markup of proposed legislation by August 3, 2001. The Committee’s concept papers can be viewed at the following Internet website:

<http://agriculture.house.gov/farmbill.htm>