

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**June 18, 2001**

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LAST WEEK

THREE SPENDING BILLS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE -- The House of Representatives currently has three pieces of legislation under development and consideration concerning funding of agriculture programs and emergency activities.

- 1. FY 2002 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL** - On Wednesday, June 13, 2001, the full House Appropriations Committee (Chairman Young, FL) held a markup on Agriculture Appropriations for FY 2002.

A summary of reported funding for NRCS is as follows:

	FY 2002 Mark	Change from FY 2001
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.

** \$ 24.4 million is designated for pay cost increases.

- 2. FY 2001 EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL BILL** – On Thursday, June 14, 2001, the full House Appropriations Committee (Chairman Young, FL) held a markup on Supplemental Appropriations for FY 2001. The legislation contains a provision for \$22 million in Forest Service funding to assist with

recovery from ice storm damage in Arkansas and Oklahoma. No funding is reportedly included for NRCS emergency-related functions in the House mark.

3. FY 2001 EMERGENCY AID TO FARMERS – The House Agriculture Committee (Chairman Combest, TX) postponed a markup on draft legislation that would authorize emergency aid to farmers. The Committee markup has been rescheduled for 10:00 am, Wednesday, June 20, 2001. The legislation under consideration will be an authorization bill to make available 2001 crop year assistance to cover producers' current financial squeeze from continued declining crop market prices amid escalating energy costs. In a letter to the Committee, Office of Management and Budget Director, Mitchel E. Daniels, Jr. stated that he would recommend the President not sign a bill providing more than \$5.5 billion in additional assistance. He also urged that the Committee to utilize payment methods utilized last year in order to get assistance out to farmers in an expedited fashion.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

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

BILL	MEMBER	PURPOSE
H.R. 2094	Ballenger, NC	To amend the of March 3, 1931 (known as the Davis-Bacon Act) to increase the minimum contract size covered by the Act.
S. 990	Smith, NH	To amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to improve the provisions relating to wildlife conservation and restoration programs.
S. 1002	Snowe, MA	To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify certain provisions relating to the treatment of forestry activities.
S. 1008	Byrd, WV	To amend the energy Policy Act of 1992 to develop the United States Climate Change Response Strategy.

WETLANDS RESERVE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM

On Wednesday, June 13, 2001, Leslie Deavers with the NRCS Wetlands and Watersheds Division, briefed Senate Agriculture Committee staff on the application and funding process for WRP and WHIP. Ms. Deavers provided sample program applications, conservation plans and data demonstrating program enrollment by state for each of the two programs. Committee staff asked numerous questions about how the programs functioned; eligibility requirements; contract requirements; and asked for several pieces of follow-up information including photos of completed projects.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM AND EQIP IMPLEMENTATION – On Thursday, June 14, 2001, Mark Berkland, NRCS Director of Conservation Operations,

Michelle Gidcumb also with Conservation Operations, and Farm Service Agency staff, briefed staff of the Senate Agriculture Committee on the application and funding process for CRP and EQIP. The Committee staff expressed interest in eligibility requirements, application forms, acceptance of contracts, and oversight of lands enrolled in both programs. Committee staff asked numerous questions about how the programs functioned; clarification of the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI); compatible uses of CRP lands; and requested for several pieces of follow-up information.

THIS WEEK

KLAMATH BASIN MANAGEMENT FIELD HEARING - The House Resources Committee (Chairman Hansen, UT) will hold a field hearing on water management and endangered species issues in the Klamath Basin.

June 16	9:00 a.m.	Klamath Co. Fairgrounds 3531 S. 6 th Street Klamath Falls, OR
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FEDERAL FARM POLICY - FIELD HEARING - General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee (Chairman Chambliss, GA) of the House Agriculture Committee will hold field hearings on federal farm policy.

June 18	3:00 p.m.	Fresno, CA
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CALIFORNIA WATER ISSUES FIELD HEARING - The Water and Power Subcommittee (Chairman Calvert, CA) of the House Resources Committee will hold field hearings on water supply in California

June 18	10:00 a.m.	Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts 12700 Center Court Dr. Cerritos, CA
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June 20	Time TBA	Modesto, CA
July 2	Time TBA	San Jose, CA

HARMFUL WEED REDUCTION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING - The National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Subcommittee (Chairman Hefley, CO) of the House Resources Committee will hold a hearing on H.R. 1462, the "Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001".

June 19	10:00 a.m.	1334 Longworth
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LOOKING AHEAD

FEDERAL FARM POLICY - FIELD HEARING - General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee (Chairman Chambliss, GA) of the House Agriculture Committee will hold field hearings on federal farm policy.

June 23 9:00 a.m. Macon, GA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT OVERSIGHT HEARING - The Conservation, Credit, Rural Development and Research Subcommittee (Chairman Lucas, OK) of the House Agriculture Committee will hold an oversight hearing on rural development programs.

June 26 1:00 p.m. 1300 Longworth

WATER POLLUTION REDUCTION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING - The Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee (Chairman Duncan, TN) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing on the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council Report on assessing the scientific basis of the total maximum daily load (TMDL) approach to water pollution reduction. According to Committee staff, a federal witness will not be requested for the hearing.

June 28 9:30 a.m. 2167 Rayburn

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