

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**March 12, 2001**

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LAST WEEK

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE-Membership of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies was named. This Subcommittee's jurisdiction includes NRCS and conservation programs. The members are:

| Republicans | Democrats |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Henry Bonilla, TX, Chair | Marcy Kaptur, OH, Ranking Member |
| James Walsh, NY | Rosa DeLauro, CT |
| Jack Kingston, GA | Maurice Hinchey, NY |
| George Nethercutt, WA | Sam Farr, CA |
| Tom Latham, IA | Allen Boyd, FL |
| Jo Ann Emerson, MO | |
| Virgil Goode, Jr., VA (Independent) | |
| Ray LaHood, IL | |

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS BRIEFING – On Wednesday, March 7, 2001, NRCS staff conducted a briefing for the staff of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies. Anne Dubey, NRCS Budget Officer, led the meeting which was focused on agency issues and current programs. Tom Weber, Deputy Chief for Programs, led the discussion of NRCS activities and highlighted developments in wetlands policy, aging watershed structures, and animal agriculture issues. Staff asked questions regarding agency workload, nutrient management planning, and had functional questions about program operations. NRCS staff also highlighted the work of the snow and soil survey programs, plant materials centers, and the NRCS accountability system.

CONGRESSIONAL BRIFING ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE-On March 7, 2001 in 124 Senate Dirksen, The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) held a briefing to present the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Third Assessment Report. Rep. John Olver (MA), co-chair of the Climate Change Caucus, provided opening remarks. Dr. Robert T. Watson, chairman of IPCC, presented the report. The report states that the global average surface temperature has increased during the 20th Century.

It also maintains that snow cover and Arctic sea ice thickness have decreased. The report concludes that global temperatures and sea level temperature will continue to rise. The first and second sections of the Third Assessment Report concentrated on the science behind climate change and the impact to human and natural systems.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

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

| BILL | MEMBER | PURPOSE |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| H.R. 893 | Rep. Pitts (PA) | To amend the IRS code to exclude from estate taxes the value of certain farmland under perpetual conservation easements. |

THIS WEEK

COMMODITY PROGRAMS-The House Agriculture Committee (Chairman, Combest, TX) will hold hearings on commodity programs.

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| March 14 | 10:00 a.m. | 1300 Longworth |
| March 15 | 12:00 noon | 1300 Longworth |

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS-The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies (Chairman, Bonilla, TX) continues to hold a series of hearings on fiscal year 2002 appropriations for agencies under its jurisdiction. The remaining hearings are for the Inspector General, and Commodity Futures Trading Commission respectively. The hearings are scheduled for:

| | | |
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| March 14 | 9:30 a.m. | 2362-A Rayburn |
| March 21 | 9:30 a.m. | 2362-A Rayburn |

AGRICULTURE BUDGET FY 2002-The House Budget Committee (Chairman, Nussle, IA) will hold a hearing on fiscal year 2002 budget for the Agriculture Department. Secretary Ann M. Veneman will be the witness.

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| March 14 | 1:00 p.m. | 210 Cannon |
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