LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

May 27, 2002

NRCS, Office of Legislative Affairs Room 5121, South Agriculture Bldg. (202) 720-2771 www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/legislative/ For additional information contact: Douglas J. McKalip Eric W. Carlson Sharyn C. Alvarez

LAST WEEK

WATER MANAGEMENT AND RURAL WATER SUPPLY IN SOUTH DAKOTA SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING- The Water and Power Subcommittee (Chairman Calvert, CA) of the House Resources Committee held a hearing on May 22, 2002, on legislation reauthorizing the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply Project in South Dakota and to establish a 21st Century Water Policy Commission. Testimony from witnesses focused primarily on legislation that would establish a 21st Century Water Policy Commission to study all aspects of water management by federal, state, local, and private entities. Witnesses expressed concern over the role and responsibilities for the proposed Commission offering that water is a very complex legal issue and suggested further refinement to the legislation.

FY 2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

On May 22, 2002, the Senate Appropriations Committee (Chairman Byrd, WV) marked up legislation that would make supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2002. The legislation provides funding for defense, homeland security and other emergency needs. The Emergency Watershed Protection Program was provided \$100 million to meet existing needs for recovery work. The legislation awaits action by the full Senate following the Memorial Day Recess.

HOUSE PASSES FY 2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - On Friday, May 24, 2002, the House passed an FY 2002 supplemental appropriations providing funding for homeland security, defense, and other emergency needs.

MTBE CONTAMINATION HEARING - The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials (Chairman Gillmor, OH) held a hearing on May 21, 2002, concerning MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether) contamination in groundwater. Testimony was provided from EPA, USGS, in addition to others specifically addressing the need to identify the scope and complexity of MTBE contamination in groundwater and its possible human heath impacts. Ben Grumbles, EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, provided testimony that ongoing studies through EPA to analyze this issue are still not conclusive. Other witnesses discussed the need to establish more uniform groundwater quality guidelines linked to human health impacts to facilitate cleanup.

THIS WEEK

MEMORIAL DAY RECESS – The Senate is in recess until June 3. The House is in recess until June 4.

NEW CONCEPTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FIELD HEARING – The Energy Policy, Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee (Chairman Ose, CA) of the House Government Reform Committee will hold a field hearing titled "New Concepts in Environmental Policy." The hearing will be held at Chapman University, Orange, California in Room 209A of the Argyros Forum.

May 28 9:30 a.m. Orange, CA

LOOKING AHEAD

TRADING WATER POLLUTION REDUCTION CREDITS SUBCOMMITTEE

HEARING – The Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee (Chairman Duncan, TN) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing in implementation by EPA of a new water quality trading program, which allows water treatment facilities to trade pollution reduction. USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Mark Rey, has been invited to testify on behalf of the Department.

June 13 10:00 a.m. 2167 Rayburn Building

WATER PROJECTS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING - The Water and Power Subcommittee (Chairman Calvert, CA) of the House Resources Committee will hold a hearing on pending legislation.

June 5 2:00 p.m. 1334 Longworth Building

MINE RECLAMATION BILLS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING – The Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee (Chairman Cubin, WY) of the House Resources Committee will hold a hearing on pending legislation.

June 11 10:00 a.m. 1334 Longworth Building

COLORADO RIVER WATER USAGE PLAN FIELD HEARING - The Water and Power Subcommittee (Chairman Calvert, CA) of the House Resources Committee will hold a field hearing on implementing a plan regulating the use of Colorado River water by California. Most of the water used in the Los Angeles metropolitan area comes from the Colorado River. The hearing will be held in the City Council Chambers of the LaQuinta City Hall, 78495 Calle Tampico, LaQuinta, California.

June 14 10:00 a.m. LaQuinta, CA