

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

October 14, 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

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

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

Bill	Sponsor	Purpose
S. 3045	Clinton, NY	Amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for protection and enhancement of the environment of the Finger Lakes Region in the State of New York

CONTINUING RESOLUTION PASSED ON APPROPRIATIONS – On October 10, the House passed and the Senate cleared, the third FY 2003 continuing resolution, H.J. Res.122, to continue funding the federal government until October 18, 2002. The President signed the legislation into law on Friday, October 11.

WILDFIRES -The House Resources Committee (Chairman Hansen, R-UT) marked up legislation on October 8 including H. R. 5319, a bill to improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to address wildfire prone conditions on national forest system lands.

CLEAN WATER ACT- On October 8, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Chairman Jeffords, I-VT) held a hearing on the Clean Water Act. The hearing was a celebration of the 30th anniversary of enactment of the law. Thomas Weber, NRCS Associate Chief, was a witness at the hearing. He discussed the historic activities of USDA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, pointing out that the agency has worked on non-point source pollution issues relating to soil erosion and sedimentation for more than 60 years. He highlighted provisions of the new Farm Bill and pointed out that many new opportunities exist for farmers to conserve soil and water resources. Mr. Weber also highlighted the importance of partnerships, including conservation districts in this effort. Sen. Jeffords stated that non-point source pollution is the next important focus for achieving cleaner water and inquired about specific steps NRCS is taking in this area. Mr. Weber outlined programs reauthorized in the Farm Bill, including EQIP as specific examples of applicable programs to address nutrient management, sedimentation, and other related water quality concerns.
