LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

October 7, 2002

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LAST WEEK

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

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

Bill	Sponsor	Purpose
S. 3022	Roberts, KS	To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to suspend
		the requirement that rental payments under the
		Conservation Reserve Program be reduced by reason
		of harvesting or grazing conducted in response to a
		drought or other emergency.
S. 3023	Sarbanes, MD	To require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a
		program to expand and strengthen cooperation efforts
		to restore and protect forests in the Chesapeake Bay
		Watershed.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION PASSED ON APPROPRIATIONS – On October 3, the House passed and the Senate cleared, the second FY 2003 continuing resolution, H.J. Res.112, to continue funding the federal government until October 11, 2002. The President signed the legislation into law on Friday, October 4.

INVASIVE SPECIES – The Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee (Chairman Goodlatte, VA) of the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing on invasive species on October 2. Dave Tenny, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, testified regarding the process for addressing invasive species impacts. Dr. James G. Butler, USDA Deputy Under Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs, mentioned NRCS as a valued member of the Invasive Species Council, a multiagency group that coordinates the federal response to the problem. Several non-profit groups testified regarding the severity of the problem on rangeland and the importance of restoring native grasses that will lessen the potential for wildfires during drought.

HOUSE VETERAN DIES - Rep. Patsy Mink (HI) died on September 28 from complications associated with pneumonia. Rep. Mink, District 2, had represented Hawaii since 1964. Her name will remain on the ballot for the November 5 election.

THIS WEEK

CLEAN WATER ACT – The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Chairman Jeffords, VT) will hold a hearing on the Clean Water Act. Thomas Weber, NRCS Associate Chief, is scheduled to be a witness.

October 8 9:30 a.m. 406 Dirksen Building

RESOURCES BILL FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP – The House Resources Committee (Chairman Hansen, UT) will mark up pending legislation 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.

October 8 10:00 a.m. 1324 Longworth Building
