

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 multi-agency 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.

