

**LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:****April 9, 2001**

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**LAST WEEK**

**BUDGET RESOLUTION PASSES** - On Friday, April 6, 2001, the Senate passed the Budget Resolution, H. Con. Res. 83, by a vote of 65-35. This resolution sets the federal budget for FY 2002 at \$1.98 Trillion. The budget resolution sets funding levels for each of the appropriations subcommittees. The bill will go to Conference following the Easter/Passover Recess, which concludes on April 24. As part of debate on the Budget, the Senate adopted an amendment by Sen. Gordon Smith (OR), Sen. Tom Harkin (IA), and others that increases funding for conservation by \$1.3 billion for FY 2002.

**CALIFORNIA WATER HEARING** - The House Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power (Chairman, Ken Calvert – CA) held a hearing on April 3, 2001 regarding water issues in California. Witnesses represented several water commissions serving the Southwest U.S. Testimony focused on the positive impacts of increasing water for environmental benefits and to supply a rapidly growing population. Witnesses testified that water conservation and the development of new storage capacity in California is a critical need. Several Members questioned the impact of the Endangered Species Act on this issue. Witnesses agreed that off-stream storage provided the best strategy for addressing both habitat improvement and improving water storage. The witnesses suggested some improvement in the Endangered Species Act process could expedite permitting and provide some flexibility in addressing habitat issues. One witness stated that agriculture in the Central Valley was already 96% efficient and that the best opportunity for water conservation is from population centers rather than agriculture.

**PRESIDENT NOMINATES NEW USDA OFFICIALS** - President Bush announced the nominations of several positions at USDA. Among those announced, the President intends to nominate James R. Moseley to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. He currently runs a farming operation in Clarks Hill, Indiana. He served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment from 1990 to 1992 and was Agriculture Advisor to the Administrator of the EPA from 1989 to 1990. Mr. Moseley is a graduate of Purdue University.

The President also intends to nominate Mary Kirtley Waters to be Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Congressional Relations. She is presently the Senior Director and Legislative Counsel for ConAgra Foods where she has served since 1986. Before joining ConAgra, she served as a Legislative Assistant for Congressman Larry J. Hopkins from 1984 to 1986. Ms. Waters is a graduate of the University of Illinois and received her law degree from George Mason University.

**CHESAPEAKE BAY RESTORATION FUNDS** - On Wednesday, April 4, 2001 the House passed legislation (H.R. 642) to fund conservation efforts throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The legislation establishes a community-based, small grants program for fishery and habitat restoration projects.

### LEGISLATION OF NOTE

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

BILL	MEMBER	PURPOSE
S. 646	Sen. Feingold (WI)	To reform the Army Corps of Engineers
S. 678	Sen. Bond (MO)	To establish a watershed program for fisheries habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement, and for other purposes.
H. R. 1240	Hutchinson (AR)	Would provide for emergency funds for the Forestry Incentives Program.

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### THIS WEEK

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FIELD HEARING** - The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Chairman Robert Smith, NH) will hold a field hearing in Reno, Nevada on wildlife conservation needs.

April 10                                      1:00 p.m.                                      6000 Bartley Ranch Road, Reno, NV

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### LOOKING AHEAD

**AGRICULTURE NOMINATIONS** - The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Richard Lugar - IN) will hold a hearing on pending agriculture nominations.

April 24                                      9:30 a.m.                                      562 Dirksen

**AGRICULTURE TRADE ISSUES** – The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Richard Lugar – IN) will hold oversight hearings on agricultural trade issues.

April 25	9:30 a.m.	328-A Russell
April 26	9:30 a.m.	328-A Russell

**FEDERAL FARM COMMODITY PROGRAMS** – The House Agriculture Committee (Chairman Larry Combest – TX) will hold hearings on federal farm commodity programs. The witnesses will be representatives of the corn commodity program.

April 25	10:00 a.m.	1300 Longworth
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**EASTER RECESS** – The House and Senate are out of Session for the Easter/Passover Recess until April 24, 2001.

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