

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**May 6, 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
H.R. 4527	Miller, CA	To amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to ensure the recovery of our Nation's declining biological diversity.

FARM BILL PROCESS NEARS COMPLETION – On Wednesday, May 1, 2002, the conference report (House Report 107 - 424) for H.R. 2646, the Farm Bill, was filed by Chairman Combest (TX) on behalf of the House-Senate conference. The report is the document that resolves the differences between the House and Senate passed versions of H.R. 2646.

On Thursday, May 2, 2002, the House passed the conference report by a vote of 280-141. Earlier in the day there was an attempt to stall final passage by a procedural motion, termed a motion to recommit with instructions, initiated by Rep. Ron Kind (WI). The motion would have sent the bill back to conference and suggested that additional funds be provided for conservation, research and nutrition. The Motion was defeated by a vote of 172-251.

The legislation now goes to the Senate where debate is expected on Tuesday May 7, 2002 with a vote on Wednesday May 8, 2002. If passed, the bill will go on to the President.

A copy of both the 2002 Farm Bill Conference Report legislative language, Statement of Managers and a Section by Section Analysis can be found on the NRCS Legislative Affairs web site at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/legislative/

HOMELAND SECURITY/ EMERGENCY FY 2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS HEARING-

On Tuesday April 30, 2002, the Senate Appropriations Committee (Chairman Byrd, WV) held the first of series of hearings on the President's FY 2002 supplemental appropriations request. Secretary Veneman testified regarding the FY 2002 supplemental funding request. Secretary Veneman responded to many security questions regarding water infrastructure for water supplies, animal disease, plant pests, and food safety. A copy of Secretary Veneman's testimony is located on the web at: <http://appropriations.senate.gov/>

TAX INCENTIVES FOR OPEN SPACE HEARING- On April 30, 2002, the House Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures, Committee on Ways and Means (Chairman McCreery, LA) held a hearing on Tax Incentives for Land Use, Conservation, and Preservation. Witness included several members of congress in addition to several non-profit organizations actively involved with land conservation. The testimony was supportive of several different legislative proposals to increase the tax deductions for private landowners that sell land for conservation purposes. Pamela F. Olsen, Acting Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy for the U.S. Department of the Treasury, testified that the President supports legislation that encourages responsible stewardship of America's land by citing the FY 2003 budget proposal that recommends creating in the tax code an exclusion of 50% of capital gains for land sales to a qualified conservation group.

FUTURE OF THE FOREST SERVICE HEARING - On April 30, 2002, the House Resources Committee held a hearing on the future of the Forest Service. Sec. Ann E. Veneman, Under Secretary Mark Rey and Forest Service Chief, Dale Bosworth testified concerning Forest Service programs. Secretary Veneman mentioned the role for NRCS to work on private lands while responding to questions regarding the Farm Bill and specifically the \$50 million allocated to the Klamath Basin to EQIP in the Farm Bill conference report. She stated that the Klamath was a priority of the administration as reflected in the establishment of the Klamath Task Force by the White House.

DEPARTMENT RELEASES POLICY ON DETAILEES TO CONGRESS - Deputy Secretary James Moseley has released a new policy for requests by Congressional offices for details by USDA employees. A copy of the new policy is included with this legislative summary. *Note:* for those of you viewing this by email or on the website, please call our office, 202-720-2771, and we will fax you a copy of the new policy.

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THIS WEEK

AIR POLLUTION DANGER ASSESMENT FULL COMMITTEE HEARING -

The House Science Committee (Chairman Boehlert, NY) will hold a hearing on the latest scientific reports on the dangers of particulate air pollution .

May 8

10:00 a.m.

2318 Rayburn Building

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